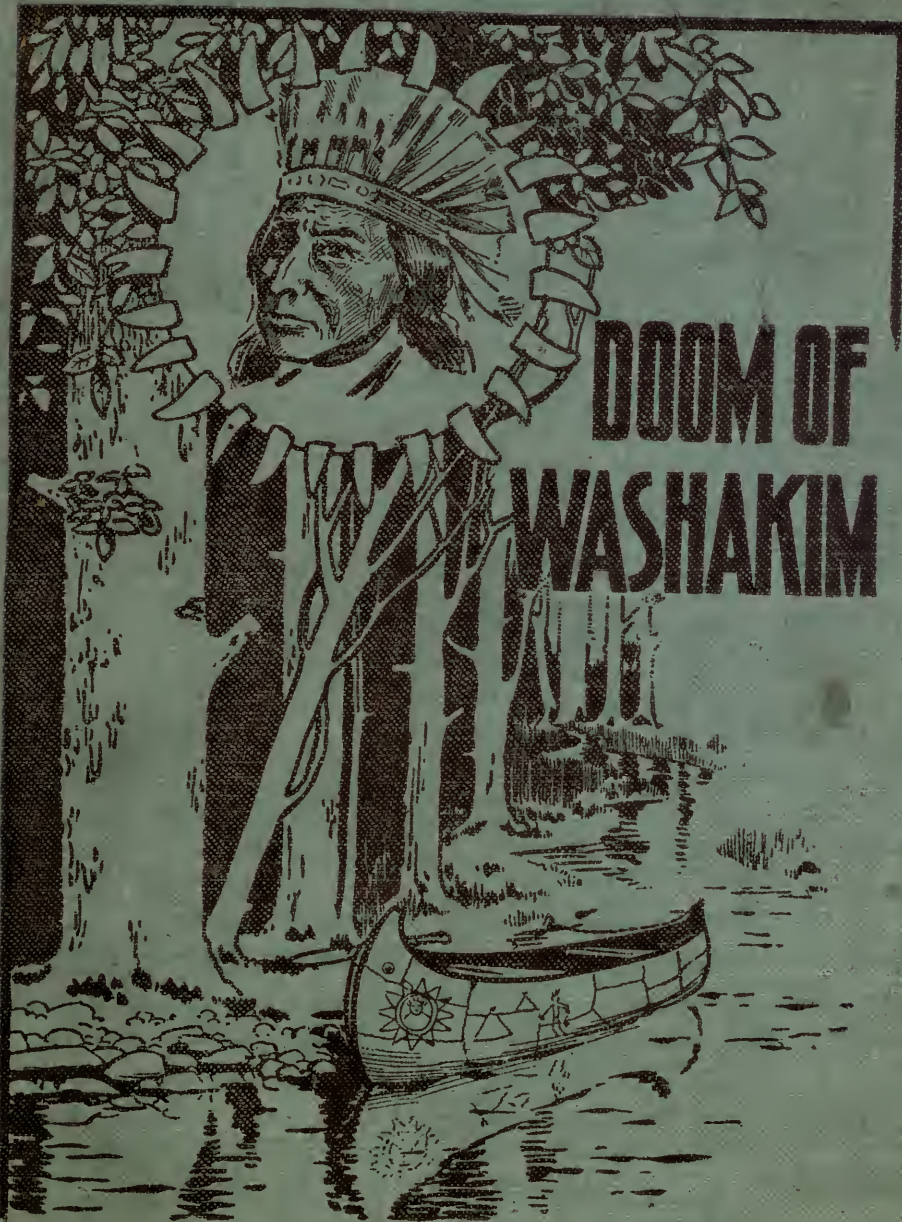


DOOM OF WASHAKIM





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Indian women

DOOM OF WASHAKIM

A CHAPTER IN KING PHILIP'S WAR

BY

THOMAS C RICE

WORCESTER MASS

J S WESBY AND SONS

1899

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DEDICATED TO THE CITY OF WORCESTER
WHICH, AS A TOWN OF 5,000 INHABITANTS, WAS MY
GODMOTHER, AND OF WHICH, BY
PROXY OR IN PERSON, I HAVE BEEN A HABITANT
BETTER 'N TWO HUNDERD 'N FORTY YEAR.¹

THE AUTHOR.

“ Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said
This is my own, my native land? ”

¹ The author's three times great-grandfather was the first white settler in the plantation of Quinsigamond, and a part of the land belonging to the primal occupant is still in possession of a descendant and namesake.

PREFACE.

A PREFACE is always an afterbirth, and to write one is invariably more or less a task to the author, and is too often a bore to the reader.

Many people never read a preface at all, but pass it by as a matter of course,—immaterial,—which is wrong, as it may possibly be important.

A preface, if an author must write one, should possess one of two qualities: It should be either instructive or amusing, and if anything in the author's meaning should chance to be very obscure, the preface might be so constructed as to aid the printer out of a dilemma and the reader into the sense.

If the preface is intended as a key to unlock the subject-matter under consideration, it is, or should be, superfluous, as the open sesame should be in the combination and not transferable. If a subject is properly treated in the body of the work there should be no necessity for a preface.

History and romance are arts, as much so as painting or sculpture.

Every work of art, literary or other, should tell its own story without a prefatory word, otherwise why not require the painter to tack to his canvas an explanatory page,

or a sculptor who has chiseled out a Minerva to place in her lap the fractured skull of a Jupiter, to denote her origin.

Preface making is simply a fashion ; a very old fashion ; one more aged than venerable, and respectable only because of its antiquity. But this author for once, in pursuance of a time-honored custom, purposes a prefatory line to a proposed historical romance. But what is all history but romance interspersed with statistics, and with characters compelled to fit the scenes, or *vice versa* ?

Pure history would be a simple statement of occurrences, more or less disjointed, and, although perhaps sequent, not indispensably so.

Casualties, being independent of motive, are not, of course, traceable to human agencies, and so do not involve human responsibility.

Acts, until mankind is all cast in the same mould, can neither be always predicted of character, nor with any certainty traced back to it.

In all history every lapse between events taxes the inventive talent of the historian to fill the vacuum with at least plausible motives touching the event next in succession, and every act or event is made the natural result of, and is predicated upon, the observed character. But character is too liable to fluctuation to be altogether reliable. Prince Hal, and Henry crowned, are very diverse personages. The coward of to-day may develop a hero to-morrow, or what we had taken for a solemn saint may turn out a mouthing Barebones, usurping empires, cutting

throats, or at best a lively rascal. Your Cromwell a commoner, is not so common as a Protector.

To be an entertaining historian one must also be possessed of the qualities of a good novelist, the chief difference in their pursuits being that the historian must utilize a foundation already laid, while the romancer may improvise one. And, while the historian is in duty bound to keep within the limits of actual occurrences, the romancer is licensed to lie as much as he chooses, and is yet entitled to acquittal, so he keeps within the bounds of probability; for the only scale by which to measure his assertion, or to weigh a fanciful diversion is—might it not have been so?

The writer of romance, historical or other, occupies an almost limitless domain, except that in treating of facts he also should be exact. The true artist shrinks from improbabilities. He never paints a scorpion with wings, nor a seraph with the tail of a dragon. He is the gymnast of literature. His stage is set upon some certain facts. Events are his appurtenances, character his appliances, and wit and imagination his paraphernalia. He is a weaver at his loom; mankind is his warp and things inanimate his woof. His web is rich or intricate according to his skill, and he has *carte blanche* for use of everything in earth, sea, or sky.

So he is true to nature his truth is absolute.

His privilege is to avail himself of all legendary lore obtainable, and his license extends to forging material to pad the lapses, or even to create new events, with scenes and characters to harmonize. If he entertains his readers

he has fulfilled his task, and if he has conveyed some new truths he has done even better. He has led imagination in untrodden paths, has perhaps benefited himself by mental exercise, and afforded his reader an hour of thoughtful recreation if no more. But my preface must still linger on the verge of commencement, while I crave pardon for an act of vandalism in purposely setting fire to a cherished literary dogma—the writing of prefaces—and now, as a formal preface to an historical romance I will proceed to say,—If you look over these chapters for information, then read them as you would inspect a mine held out for purchase. It may be salted. Beware of too easily uncovered nuggets. Don't mistake graphite for indications of either bitumen or anthracite, and waste no thought upon "fool gold." "All is not gold that glitters."

CHAPTER I.

IN the northeastern part of the Plantation of Quinsigamond, a tract of land converted in the year sixteen hundred eighty-four into the township of Worcester, by Decree of the General Court of Massachusetts, at a point near the old stage road from Boston to Keene, and near where West Boylston and Shrewsbury corner against Worcester's line, or, to be more explicit, one hundred rods due south from Eagle Rock, and by the City farm's brook where it flows under the east brow of Burncoat Hill, was enacted the first scene in a tragedy which culminated in the destruction of the second settlement of Worcester, wrapped central Massachusetts in a veil of smoke, and bathed her hearthstones in the blood of her sons and daughters. At the place here designated, on an October afternoon in the year seventeen hundred one, a startled buck darted between the trunks of the wide-apart old chestnut trees and was making for the hillside, when two arrows, shot from opposite directions by unseen hands, pierced either flank, and with a convulsive bound, a halt, a momentary quiver of the whole frame, the sharp muzzle elevated by spasmodic twitches skyward, the wounded deer fell to one knee, rallied for a moment, and then with a sidelong stagger stretched its limbs upon the leafy carpet

of the brookside and gasped away that portion of its life which had not issued through the fatal wounds.

As the game reeled to its death, two Indians sprang from opposite thickets, and as each viewed the other, unconscious until that moment that he had a rival, they halted about twenty paces apart, and taking into mind the situation, seemed for a moment undecided how to act.

As they thus stood we will sketch them.

One was tall, perhaps twenty years of age, with wide shoulders, straight limbs, slightly stooping carriage, black hair hanging loosely about his neck and confined only by a belt of wampum that encircled his head. A red wool blanket, folded and made to cross one shoulder met under the other arm and was bound by a body belt of raw hide, which also was attached to and supported a short shirt of soft tanned buckskin. Upon his feet were high-topped, laced buckskin moccasins. A quiver of arrows upon his back, a bow in his left hand, and a tomahawk and butcher knife in his belt completed his outfit.

He was the Chief of the Quinsigamond tribe, Wandee of Wigwam Hill.

The other Indian, who stood so statue-like in the short distance, was Shonto, Chief of the Washakims, or Twin Lake tribe.

Both these tribes were parts of the Nipnet confederacy, a nation that included all the tribes between the Massachusetts, the sea shore tribe, and the Mohawks of the Connecticut Valley, and from the Penobscots on the north, to the Pequods on the south.

The Washakim was shorter of stature than the Hill Indian, and was apparently somewhat older. His legs were slightly bent and knees set wide apart, but with his heavy chest, his thick, bear-like neck, and muscles that would grace a gladiator, he seemed fully a match for the rival whose height and superb proportions gave him perhaps the more commanding appearance.

The Washakim chief wore the red blanket, but a lynx skin shirt, and was otherwise accoutred like the first.

Both chiefs wore the steel butcher knife ; for the whites were already settling upon their front and rear, and upon either flank, and were eager to barter implements of war or peace for the rich peltry of beaver and otter then plentiful in all the inland waters.

The white man had come to occupy the Plantation of Quinsigamond, had become possessed of it by a grant from the colonial authorities, who had based their right of bequest upon the assumption that a stranger, if he be a heathen, can have no rights which an Englishman is bound to respect. To be sure the planters had called for negotiations with the chiefs of two or three tribes concerned, had placed before them a gallon of rum to stir their stolid spirits into trading humor, and had then acquired, for "ten pounds of lawful money, or its equivalent in store goods," a tract of land eight miles square ; had repeated the play of the birthright and the pottage, and left the Indians homeless except by sufferance.

There was much that was bad in the transaction. But this is not now important, and I have digressed here merely

to indicate the proprietary standing of these lords of the woods. Their fathers had sold them out twenty years previous.

"It is my game," said the taller Indian, in his guttural, Nipnet dialect, as he started forward with a determined air to appropriate the spoil.

"Stop!" said the Washakim; "It was my arrow that stung him."

And they again halted within three paces of the disputed property, each fully assured that his own weapon had effected the death, and disbelieving that the other had made a shot at all; for the arrows had left the stiff ash bows at the same moment, with a velocity that scarcely found impediment in the boneless matter of the yielding flank, and had flown far beyond and out of sight, while the copious flow of blood had obliterated the points of entry and exit.

"I take it!" said the Washakim, and catching the dead buck by the antlers he threw it with a whirl upon his stout shoulders. But the tall Indian was in no mood to be robbed with impunity.

It is nothing to our purpose to depict the scene that followed. No words were bandied, but a quarrel ensued. A sharp and desperate struggle. The Washakim met with hindrance and retaliated with a blow. The young Quinsigamond was master of the spoil and the Washakim chief went to the happy hunting grounds.

As will appear, the fate of Shonto and the arm that

slew him became known at the Twin Lakes,¹ and Tehuanto, a younger brother and chief, set his face upon revenge.

¹Twin Lakes. The two lakes of Washakim—twelve miles to the north of Lake Quinsigamond.

CHAPTER II.

It now becomes necessary to turn our attention for a while from this incipient tribal feud toward the new white settlement, two miles west of Lake Quinsigamond, and three to the south of the scene of the encounter with which the chapter closed, as upon this disturbance of the peace hangs, in a measure, the fate of the colonists here located.

At the head of the valley of the Blackstone, on that river's tributary, the Bimelick,¹ in the Plantation of Quinsigamond, a few rods north of what is now known as Lincoln Square, and close by the palisades that encircled a log house of sufficient capacity to admit of the moving about freely of seventy persons in arms, a building slit with loop-holes for musketry and styled the Castle, was a frame house thirty-five by forty feet upon the ground and one and one-half stories in height. If to this description you add a roof with a pitch of forty degrees covering the base, and a water shed or "lean-to" of much less inclination running from one eave of the main structure fifteen feet out to the rear, you have the area of its base, and have seen the exterior of the Castle Tavern. Descend-

¹ Bimelick, later Mill Brook, now diverted to an underground channel—as Worcester's sewer main.

ing the cellar stairs, you observe a stone chimney base measuring twenty feet in each direction and forming a low arch, and above stairs, upon the ground floor, that aperture in brick called a fire-place, blazing this November morning with a fore-stick fifteen inches in diameter and eighty-four inches in length, with a back-log but two feet shorter, both logs resting upon two huge brass mounted andirons, while the space between is heaped with burning wood until crane and pot hooks redden with the fervency of heat. If you look at those four-pound billets of iron, with their long tapering handles terminating in a bended ring, and see the shovel ("fire-slice") with its iron staff seven feet in length, and by the other chimney jamb you see the tongs with legs of ample length to fit an ostrich, and if you deign to look at that little ten-foot bar with its dozen of flowing blue quart mugs, then you have seen the tavern hall, the gentlemen's reception room; the place where they concoct, with the aid of those iron billets heated to a white glow, the brew divine, designated in ye olden time as flip. And this is the room where the landlord stirs up for clergy and laymen, for saints and sinners, for the doomed and the elect, what was termed "rum toddy." Nor is our landlord stingy in his dealing out. Why should he be? This essence of Jamaica cane juice costs but two shillings per gallon.

Our landlord, the proprietor of the Castle Tavern, is Captain John Wing, a young man with whom we have large expectancy in the near future.

In the great kitchen we may see not only the duplicate

of that monster fire-place, but by its side, when the matron is ready with those mince pies, you may look into the glowing blue red maw of the now open oven and see the seething crater of Popocatepetl in miniature. See, now, that young woman in the corner of the room pacing back and forth, alternately minding her distaff and impelling that spinning-wheel; see the white-haired grandmother by the window, adjusting her spectacles to focus upon the page of a much worn, leather-covered, yellow-papered copy of the Holy Bible, the larger half of the most extensive library in the plantation, if we except one owned by a little blue-eyed, sunny-haired, young lady up on Sagatabscot Hill. But she is just from school at Boston, and her doting father has squandered three years' income to help her to an education.

We shall learn to recognize the little lady of Sagatabscot, for the fates and the witches, and those wild, red devils of the woods will be pulling at her skirts by and by. See that embryo soldier and statesman, that incipient democrat, who shall live to declare in the face of his presumptuous sovereign, Royal George, that "all men are born free and equal." See him gallop through the kitchen astride the house dog Bose,—a canine pet, somewhere between the mastiff and fox hound, with the mastiff dominant. Hear the matron stamp and scold the midget whose mimic equestrianism has imperiled that table full of savory mince pies that wait, but for a moment, till the iron door is again opened, when down into the red-hot bowels of that glowing chasm those mince pies must go,

after a little waiting, while it sheds a ruddy glare and paints with crimson those smoke-grimed skeins of drying pumpkin that depend from poles attached at either end to the great beams of the kitchen overhead, waiting for a lull in its fierce fervency.

But who among us, takes much interest in strangers?

And what but strangers to us are the men and women of two hundred years ago, except as we follow them to their homes, inspect their environments, regard their manners, listen to their conversations, and by appreciating their surroundings, their joys, their sorrows, their trials, we make acquaintanceship, take on a measure of sympathy, of affiliation, and so learn to think with them?

We have seen the kitchen : Let us go back to the bar-room and listen to the talk of those new-comers ; and now that his attention is somewhat averted, let us look again at that lusty young fellow, the captain,—Captain John Wing. Six feet in his stockings is his height. Light-haired, blue-eyed, and dressed in knee breeches of olive brown ; dark, silk stockings, short, cut-away coat, and cocked hat. No facial adornment of hair for him. It isn't respectable in a young man to wear his beard.

There are guests in the room. Deacon Henchman, father of Captain Daniel ; Fiske, the surveyor, and the Parson—Meekman. The parson was born in the north of Ireland, and his real name was Mike Rafferty ; but he thought the name ill-befitting a Puritan pulpit, so they changed it in Boston, in the great Colonial Assembly, changed it to Meekman, and left off the too Romish pre-

fix ; but Michael or Meekman—except that he wanted the brogue—was as Irish as Irish could be.

And others were there. There was Sargent, and Hart, and the Rice's—Gershom and Jonas Rice,—and Jim Pyke. Jim Pyke, in his way, was peculiar. There were the Paynes, and a Curtis,—Curtis, too, was a captain—and others were there. But no one among them is so silent as Captain John Wing ; none seems to feel so little his importance. He defers to everybody ; occasionally remarks, but gainsays none.

And yet, our landlord is known the country wide. Known for his skill with a rifle, for his superb equestrianism, and he has no rival as an athlete from Boston to New Amsterdam. He is known also as a terror to marauding Indians, more than one of whom he has sent with a leaden billet of introduction to the Great Manito. And Captain John was known for other things, for although the devoutest Churchman—all were Churchmen ; it was contrary to law to be other than such—the devoutest Churchman I say, must confess that the young captain was first to Church on Church days, and the most liberal giver when the hat was passed ; and beside, he paid—with the exception of Daniel Henchman, and of his own father, the heaviest tax in the plantation. Yet rumor had it that Captain John gave royal suppers in Boston at least twice in a year, that he consorted with men of the city who dared dispute the doctrines of Calvin, and who even declared their blasphemous surmises that God was more than six literal days in the work of creation ; and aside

from this, Captain John had been known to gallop his thoroughbred toward Long Pond after nightfall of a Saturday. And was not the eve of Saturday holy as a Sabbath morning? when, as the law reads, "no man shall ride or walk except to and from Divine Service, or on a mission of mercy." And what was at Long Pond¹ except those heathenish wretches for whom the sulphurous flames were leaping and licking the battlements of hell?

Captain John Wing had been the subject of much secret and earnest prayer; for many a comely lass, both in the plantation and at Marlborough, took in his spiritual welfare a most decided interest, and the spinsters who had turned the first corner, and spinsters who had turned all corners, and passed all reasonable hopes of matrimonial alliances, the further they had gone in such direction the more they declared that Captain John was ripening for the harvest of eternal damnation.

There was one figure moving about the bar-room unconcernedly, but with something of a restless air, as if suffering from ennui, and now and then casting a glance, as of contempt, upon the plain old farmers in their homespun attire. He was perhaps five feet ten in height, admirably proportioned, with slightly curling dark hair, and eyes of dark, grayish blue, and ever restless, as if impatient of his surroundings.

He was dressed in a velvet hunting suit, riding boots and spurs, and with wide open shirt collar exposing much of the throat and white symmetrical column of his neck.

¹ Long Pond—Lake Quinsigamond.

His only display of beard was a dark line upon the upper lip, drooping at the corners of a firmly closed mouth. A visorless cap of otter skin, tipped forward almost to the eyebrows, partially shading features strong, well balanced and mobile, but with an expression of pride amounting to almost insolence, completes his picture.

His speech and usual manner marked him for a man of education, accustomed to society much more polished than, with an exception or two, was to be found in the plantation. But the exceptions were not here noticeable, so adroitly did they adapt themselves to their surroundings.

This man is Eugene Archer. He came here as the invited guest of John Wing. We may notice him in particular as he is destined to occupy important positions in many of the subsequent incidents of this drama of mystery and blood, of constancy, treachery and despair, of witchery, wickedness and retribution.

Not a penny does this man care whether things go right or wrong in the plantation. And why should he, being alien to it? He likes hunting, can ride or shoot with any man in America; will not turn his back upon a bear, a lynx or an Indian, and he is capital company—for such as happen to suit him.

It was now early candle-light, and one by one the farmers and the blacksmith, the wheelwright and the housejoiner, having finished the labors of the day, came into the Castle Tavern and drew their chairs before the glowing, crackling, chestnut log fire that eagerly devoured the

frequent armfuls of birch wood bestowed upon it by the negro, Jake, the serving man. And as he dropped his light but bulky burden, the roar and crackle of the dancing, leaping, white flames, with their yellow red borders deepening into the sooty blackness of the chimney back, reddened the faces of the guests, gleamed in reflected light from the polished emerald tinge of the semi-transparent bull's-eye panes of English window glass, and sparkled from the eye-balls of the house cat in a far corner.

"Well, Parson," said Deacon Henschman, to the Divine, who sat by the chimney corner, stirring with the pewter spoon the sugar which the toddy stick had failed to quite reduce to solution in his evening dram, "what success are you having up in Washakim?"

"I think, Deacon, we have five hopeful ones in that branch of the Nipnets. Five poor souls plucked as brands from the burning."

"Who labors mostly with the converts?" asked the deacon.

"I preach to them of the atonement, which by the way they so little understand that they frequently break out with such questions as, 'Why didn't the other two Gods help Jesus?' To their unregenerate minds the idea of the Trinity seems utterly incomprehensible."

"Do you labor long with them?"

"Not at present, if I can keep the exhorters up to their work. I left the two converted Packachoags, Israel and Jacob, to minister to their spiritual needs. They are

competent to do all but to baptize the penitents. Jacob is very apt at expounding Scripture."

"I'm mighty 'fraid," said the deacon, "that we shall have up-hill work with them Washakims. If you'd believe me, I offered Shonto five pounds sterling for a thousand acres of intervale along the lower Quinnapoxit, but he only grunted, and said, 'You big buy man. Pale face better buy tree lan'.' I pocketed his scorn. He's a tough Injun, you know. They're treacherous fellers, these unconverted."

"They don't keer a snap for rum, nuther," chimed in Jim Pyke, who seemed to combine ignorance of language with native wit and critical talent. "It'll be mighty hard to fetch 'em, 'less ye Christianize 'em. If they'd on'y fill up like the Tatnik and Bumskit Injuns, there'd be some hopes on 'em."

"What about the Packachoag converts, Parson Meekman? Did you fix rum rations for them? their stay'll be short unless you manage to keep up a little enthusiasm."

"Why, yes, Deacon; I couldn't forget to 'feed my sheep.' Realizing that 'man cannot live by bread alone,' I promised them two quarts of rum every Saturday, and an extra pint for every candidate for baptism. They must be encouraged in the work of the Lord, and we must not stint them beyond reasonable limit. They will come to your store for rations, Deacon. Of course you will charge it to the Parish."

"Of course, Parson, but we must hound them out of

the settlement as soon as they get their rum. 'They'll both be drunk within an hour and may be troublesome. The two kinds of spirits don't always harmonize, you know.'

If the reader supposes that the author affects the style of expression here introduced, either because he regards with complaisance a pernicious habit, or that by putting into the mouths of professed Christians language respecting the natives which can but seem, when considered by itself, heartless in the extreme, he delights in holding up to obloquy the characters of those stern old pioneers, or of ridiculing the tenets by which they were guided, he is assuredly mistaken. The sentiments they expressed were but the result of an education, which itself was the outgrowth of conditions.

All Europe had, up to this period, imbibed as an article of faith the literal interpretation of Scripture regarding the heathen and all their belongings, and presumed themselves to be heirs, through acceptance of the new dispensation, to the promises made by Jehovah to His chosen people, and, for the matter of strong drink, they had yet to resolve the discrepancy between "a little is good for the stomach's sake," and, "in the end it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

Popular habits and sentiments change with dates; with generations. Your forefathers—the colonists, held black men and their children, some of whom were not so black, as slaves, and they made slaves occasionally of red men,

and even sold them into perpetual servitude to far off countries.¹

And they could give good scriptural authority for so doing. And your New England fathers, aye! and mothers, with their pastors, and all men and women, even well into the nineteenth century, drank New England rum and thought it neither more harmful, nor sinful, than do you in imbibing coffee. Coffee and tea are your stimulants; spirituous liquors were theirs. They had no coffee, and tea at pound sterling for pound avoirdupois was expensive for frugal men to indulge in, and their wives, or the one in fifty who knew whether to infuse a teaspoonful or a teacupful of the drug for a party of three, must needs reserve their costly compliments to decorate a table for guests numbered among the elite, as visitors from Boston.

Shall we belie history to avert a spasm of disgust? or shall we be true to the customs of the times to which we date?

“Probably,” broke in Gershom Rice, who, till now, had been a silent listener, “probably Tehuanto is now chief of the Washakims. Since the taking off of Shonto he’ll be apt to be sulky, won’t he, Deacon? By the way, Deacon, something must be done about that matter of the murder. The Whashakims say we have taken the Hill Injuns under our wing, and they affect to hold us responsible in some way for Shonto’s death.”

¹The child—a boy—of King Philip, was placed upon the auction block in Boston and sold to a sea captain, who in turn sold him in the Bermudas.

"How sure are they, 'Gershom, that a Quinsig killed Shonto?" asked Henchman.

"It don't matter, as I see, Deacon, what evidence they have of it; the result is all the same, so they believe it. These Injuns are onreasonable critters, they jump from premises to conclusion without much care for follerin' a line of evidence, and I've noticed that they are giner'ly about right; at any rate they're allus ready to hazard their fortune on an intuition, as I call it. But they do say that two or three arrers from Wandee's quiver were found by the body. Wandee's arrers, ye know, are allus headed with them black p'int of quartz from the ledge back er the little mountain,¹ and he's the only Injun that uses 'em."

"Proof enough, I guess, Gershom. In fact there's not another Indian this side of Mount Hope that would dare to tackle Shonto. We shall have to move in the matter, or the Washakims will plant corn on the Quin- napoxit until doomsday. I will appoint you, Pyke, to arrest and bring in Wandee for trial."

"'P'int me, do ye? Did I understand you to say Pyke? Well, I swanny? I'm obleeged for the compliment, but I'll be excused if you'd jest as lief. That ar Injun's a bad man ter take. If yer want I should bring in the old painter that's been er killin' the cattle, I'll undertake it. I might outwit the painter an' shoot him, but ye can't fool that Injun."

Specimens of black quartz are found at the coal mine between Millstone and Wigwam hills.

"Well, as I'm Justice of the Peace, and have authority in the matter, I suppose I must commission somebody. I don't want to send in a ferret that's afraid of the game."

"You can think me a coward, Deacon, and call me so, but when yer find yer man that's brave enough for this eer job, jest let me know."

"You are excused, Jim. What do you say, Comfort?" asked the deacon, addressing Comfort Hart, of Packachoag. "You are a match for any Injun living. Will you do it?"

"Not while I've a wife and children dependent on me. What dew you take me fer, Deacon? A Samson, or another David? You may as well make up your mind, if you want that Injun, to send a file of militiamen, and then you've got to coax him away from the Hill alone, or you'll leave your scalps at Wigwam."¹

"I don't seem to be very fortunate in my appointments. What do you say, Gershom? Can I dispose of this trust to you?"

"No, sir, you can't. That's settled. I have my doubts if the whole community could take him. You'd have two hundred scalp-knives about your ears in as many seconds."

"Cap'n John, you seem to be the only hopeful one left. This matter must be brought to a head, Cap'n, or the Washakims will give us trouble. Tehuanto's not to be trifled with now his blood is up. He is no good-natured

¹Wigwam Hill, two miles from Worcester, and on the shores of "Long Pond"—Lake Quinsigamond.

Pegan, no pious Packachoag. If you can quiet the Washakims I shall have some hope of getting the intervalles; but justice is the thing we're looking for, Cap'n John. Justice, you know, and the intervalles afterward. What do you say, Cap'n?"

"I say, Deacon, that if Wandee is to suffer the ignominy of an arrest, and the others, married men with families, hesitate, why then I say, as I have the least at stake, it is but fair that I undertake the unpleasant duty. When shall I produce the prisoner, if I can do it at all?"

"I beg pardon, Your Honor," interrupted the Boston man, Archer, walking up before the fire, "I am a stranger here, and it may appear unseemly in me to tender services unasked, but if the planters here are too busy, as would seem, I, being at leisure and half dead with ennui, will make a tender. Don't you want a deputy, Captain? Sort of a lieutenant? I'm dying for exercise."

The captain smiled at this seeming braggadocia, but he had reason to know it was not such, and by an apt and ready answer turned the attention, as also the facial expression of the sturdy planters who, up to this moment were leering, half in surprise, half in contempt, at the dandy in velvet breeches, top boots and silver spurs, whose presumption so overmatched their preconceived ideas of his personal prowess.

"If I find the task too difficult for me to accomplish, Eugene, there's not a man within forty miles I could sooner rely upon to serve me in my need."

Respect for courage is as much a part of sturdy manhood as is the love for women and children, or for anything comparatively helpless. The one commands deferential, the other sympathetic regard, and this off-hand guarantee of Archer's reliability had the effect to divert the farmers' eyes again, and this time to produce an expression of respect, bordering upon admiration, which found vent in an audible murmur of applause.

"Tuesday morning then, Cap'n, Tuesday morning of next week, ten o'clock of the day. Fail not at your peril. I believe that is the term, Cap'n. You can command what aid you need, but I doubt if you'll get any but this gallant gentleman from Boston. You don't need any warrant to take him. He's only an Injun. Tuesday morning, a week. It will take me some time to scratch together the law part of it. Parson Meekman, you must loan me your copy of the Colonial Statutes. He must have justice, you know, Parson. If he's innocent it won't do to let any personal motives stand in the way of acquittal, not even for the benefit of the Washakims, who own the intervalles. But he's only an Injun. I believe they make distinctions, don't they, Parson? In the Colonial Courts, I mean."

"Justice is justice, Deacon," answered the parson. "I recognize no such distinction; and being, by virtue of my office, patriarch of the flock and expounder of the higher law, I will submit to no misconstruction of the term. This man seems to be made in the image of God and is therefore my neighbor. To be sure he belongs to a race of

unprofitable servants; sons who have wasted their patrimony, servants who have made no wise use of the talents loaned them by the Master, and as such are, by the letter of the law, doomed. But there is a difference between God's justice and that which he delegates to us, His servants. We have no warrant to execute His justice, except in actual war, and under the Mosaic dictum. I shall put my foot down solidly against any abuse of power, or any corruption of justice in deference to Colonial Statutes, as against the higher law, until such time as by some overt and aggressive act these children of the Father restrain the spread of the Gospel, or trespass upon the chosen people of God."

"I guess you're about right, Parson. It don't quite agree with some of your sermons, but there's often quite a difference between preaching and practice. I notice that while you brandish the flaming sword of the Almighty, and cry 'Vengeance is mine saith the Lord,' as if intent on its execution upon this Sodom of the wilderness, you feed their hungry, nurse their sick, and shed womanly tears over their distress. Tuesday morning a week. Get pen and ink, Cap'n. I may as well impanel my jury at once; or had I better serve him with a simple Justice trial? The law allows it, you know. He's only an Injun."

"Jury trial, Deacon," said Captain John. "You said he should have justice, and justice is safer in the hands of twelve men than of one. Jury trial, or you may get your prisoner as you can. I'll be party to no mockery in this matter."

"All right, Cap'n. I merely wanted the benefit of your judgment. Please write while I call my jury. Digory Sergeant, Comfort Hart, Ephraim Curtis, Jonas Rice, John Payne, Gershom Rice, Samuel Henchman, George Danson, David Fisk, Hopeful Creswait, Peter Goulding, William Weeks. If any man in this list of names has already formed an opinion with regard to the guilt or innocence of the accused, or from conscientious scruples cannot with peace of mind serve upon this jury, he will so declare it. George Danson, what have you to say?"

"Your Honor is aware that I belong to the Society of Friends, and as it is among the possibilities that a true verdict might call for blood, I cannot conscientiously serve."

"George Danson is excused. James Pyke, will you occupy the position vacated by George Danson?"

"Wall, yas! I don't keer if I dew. I ain't got no scruples, and right's right. If 'taint, we ken make it so; but I'd like ter know if ye've made out an indictment yet. Ye've 'paneled a jury, but what's the offence? and who's the feller to be tried? Seems like ye'r gitting the keart afore the horse."

"It doesn't matter, Jim. The prisoner is only an Injun."

"Funny 'bout the prisoner. Haven't ketcht him yet, have ye, Deacon?"

"If it wan't so late in the day, Jim, I'd arrest you for contempt of court. Put down Jim Pyke, Cap'n."

The Justice now rose, or rather got down from his seat

upon the bar, with all the dignity supposable in a Judge, with the first trial day fixed, when he is to preside.

"I say, judge," called out Jim Pyke, "I've got my chores ter dew, an' ef you'll excuse me I'll tottle."

"One moment, Jim. It's not often that we get into formal conditions, unless it's at meeting time, and the parson looks after that? Let's have this thing right."

The deacon had been too much in command of the volunteer militia to admit of any oversight or omission in point of ceremony.

"Attention! Right dress! No, no! that's not the order, the language I mean, for the occasion. Attention, company! Out again!"

"Fault's in the bar, ain't it, Deacon?" roared out Jim Pyke, and twenty suppressed chuckles announced a recognition of the pun.

"It'll come 'round all right, Jim," answered the appreciative but good natured Justice; "but speaking of the term bar reminds me that the Court is bound to furnish an advocate for the murderer, the accused I mean. Please to nominate. That's as good a way as any. If I appoint one, somebody'll say I'm partial."

"John Wing," called out a dozen voices, with no counter nomination.

"John Wing it is. It's no use to put unanimity to vote. You are hereby notified, warned I should have said, to appear next Tuesday week, at ten A. M. of the clock, armed and equipped as the law (that can't be right,

Cap'n). Come, anyway. He's only an Injun. Fail not at your peril."

"That kinder sounds like the judicial side er civilization. Shouldn't wonder if ye had a real court house here sometime in the futer. Try him, anyhow, shan't ye, Deacon?" chimed in Pyke.

"Of course, Jim, we shall try him. Shan't waste all this powder for nothing."

"That's ef yer ketch 'im; ye must ketch yer wood-chuck, yer know, afore yer eat him. Going ter try him for the murder, or fer the intervalles? He is only an Injun yer know. The bar 'll fix it, if it's well patronized."

Suppressed laughter was no longer the rule. The house roared at Jim's last sally; but the Justice, good-naturedly seeing the point, rapped to order, and replied:

"Justice, Jim! Justice first, and the intervalles afterward, if there's no bar to the last. Cap'n, you may give us something warming all 'round, if you please. Wait, Jim. About four mugs, Cap'n, if you think that'll go 'round. Will you jine us, Pastor?"

"I'll have a hot Scotch, Deacon, if there is no objection. That egg batter doesn't agree with my stomach. No Scotch, you say? Well, you've a lemon, and may give me a rum sour."

"Yes, Parson," said the captain who, although not doing bar service, was yet acting master, "the express is just in and the lemons are here. These six horses have done pretty well, only twelve hours on the road from Boston. Forty-five miles, and more than a ton load."

Four quart mugs were arranged along the bar, and in each mug was placed a portion of egg batter. A one gallon tin measure half full of home brewed malt beer received the red-hot loggerheads as they were drawn sparkling from the bed of live coals, and as the beer frothed and sputtered under the fierce influence of heat, it roared like a beach surf, and gradually the white foam rose to the top and crowned the measure. Into the mugs was now poured the boiling liquid, and when the serving man had duly flavored the concoction with a gill of New England rum to each mug, and had heightened the exquisite aroma by a sprinkling of nutmeg, the mugs were passed from hand to hand around the seated circle and was sipped at first, while the heat was at its utmost fervency, and then as it cooled, was drained by successive attacks even to the nutmeg dregs, when each bade each good night and all went home.

A sound of clattering heels died away in the direction of Packachoag, Sagatabscot and the Curtis hills, and all was still again.

As the last glimmer of candles faded from the windows of the Castle Tavern, and night, solemn and earnest night, shut down upon the village clearing and its far-reaching, sombre environs of primal chestnut woods, a nimble foot-step, as of a fiery horse, was heard at the log stable, and the whites in the eyes of a black Barbary stallion gleamed in the moonlight as the saddled beast pawed and champed upon his bit, and tossed his thin, wiry neck and head, impatient for his rider's mounting.

Let us look over this desert angel, this combination of every grace which Deity deigned to bestow, as the climax of animated creation.

Blacker than the coal stone that crops out of the hill-side to the west of Wigwam Hill—a glossy, jet black, with not a false hair from croup to muzzle, was the hue of Pompey, as men called him, and by the glare of the tal-lowed wick, as its light shot out in a thousand radiating spears through the perforations of the tin lantern, or as the fickle moonbeams broke through parting, fugitive clouds, the eyes pitched forward, half their orbs in white, to watch the master as he moved about, while the sharp pointed ears were sprightly in their movements as the speckled woodpecker dancing at morning to the flickering sunlight as it leaps from leaf to leaflet, from knob to knob on the rough bark of the old chestnut trunks.

And that thin mane and tail, straight back-line, deep shoulders, withers high, clean fetlock and pastern, with the long and muscular forearm, told of speed and endurance as well as grace.

Pompey, the beautiful, the wise, half human brute, is a character in the unfolding drama.

As the captain swings by the stirrup to his seat in the saddle, Pompey is in the air, and is now sweeping at a twelve-mile lope up along the Boston bridle-path, now Lincoln Street.

CHAPTER III.

THERE is, at the foot of Wigwam Hill, upon the eastern side and forming part of the shore of Lake Quinsigamond, a little green plat, a green it is now, and a green it was two hundred years ago. But in the interim it has three times grown up a forest, to be again and again denuded as its sturdy growth gave promise of a lumber harvest.

Every lover of the beautiful in scenery will thank the fortune that recently placed the property in hands whose interests are a guarantee for its future preservation as the tidy lap of the little mountain in its rear.¹

The hill, and this bit of tabled lake shore land of which we speak, may be hereafter considered as the culminating point of more than one design, some of which were bright, some dark, some sweet, some awful.

That little piece of greensward, perhaps three acres in extent, was bordered by a deep ravine upon the north, a sharp boulder-ridden ridge and glen upon the south, the lake some twenty feet below it on the east, and westward, steep rising land for perhaps ninety feet, with here and there a primitive chestnut tree, or a dark green hemlock, and above, a bald, black precipice, which we surmount

¹Mountain and plat are at present the property of the Natural History Society of Worcester.

by following zig-zag ledges, to find above still other ground rising abruptly, to terminate in still another scarp of rock much less in height, and over and beyond a nearly level acre or more of earth, forming the crown of the hill. That piece of green sward with its protecting elevation in the rear and its equally assuring liquid frontage, was the stronghold and home of that little tribe of Nipnet Indians called the Quinsigamonds, the constant friends of the whites, while the most dreaded among the sister tribes of New England for their courage, skill, and warlike proclivities.

In passing up the precipitous face of the hill we have reached an altitude of perhaps one hundred and eighty feet. In looking downward you scarcely observe that bit of green plain below so beautiful to you at first. You are impressed that your standpoint is nearly vertical to and overhangs the liquid base, and the more so because your observation is momentarily distracted by the thousand charms that burst upon the now enraptured sense of sight.

It is a moonlit midnight at the lake, and your attention is caught up by the shimmering, glittering surface of five miles of water, rocked into semi-quiescence by the languid south wind as it creeps stealthily up the valley of Quinsigamond.

The moonlight, hooded now, and now unmasked by the white, swift-winged aerial scuds, now dances up and down the lake, kisses the glowing spaces, and in its fervency lights fires upon the opalescent ruffle-crowns, or gleams in rifts and patches far down among the islands.

At the time of which we write, birch-bark canoes were gliding in and out of those deep bays, and the wild geese, halting in their angular migrative processions, now hissed in the shadows of pine headlands, or rose with defiant honk, upon majestic wing as the whistling, flint-headed bolt stung the fluttering gander to his death. Then some fifty tent-like structures made of poles converging upward from the base, bound together at the top with walnut withes and covered with the bark of the white birch, might have been seen on the little plat, and up and down among the chestnut trees the gleaming white of other wigwams assured one that he overlooked an Indian town.

On this night, where but a moment ago all was silent, we hear a clattering of hoofs, and discern dark bodies moving by every wigwam and coming from every nook and glen for fifty yards around to gather about the midnight rider of that fretful black stallion, for it is he, and the quick ears of the Indians had heard the horse pounding down through the valley after leaving the bridle-road, and were on foot to greet him. No beast ever bore a more welcome visitor, for the tribe was assuming a condition of anxiety. The praying Indians had played the eavesdropper and brought to Wigwam Hill, in broken, half-heard sentences, the burden of the white men's conference. Captain John they could trust; and while they half feared they wholly loved him.

He had halted at the lodge more times than the people of the plantation dreamed of.

Dismounting, the rider passed the rein to the young

bucks who were only too glad of an opportunity to handle and caress the fiery specimen of equine beauty.

The last to approach, although the first afoot, was a tall Indian wrapped in a bear-skin blanket, and in the uncertain light from a mottled sky in a moonlit midnight, together with the almost wholly mantled figure, even noting his great height, we might, but for the verbal salutation, fail to recognize in him the Chief of the Hill Indians, Wandee the Quinsigamond.

After a few words of conversation, conducted chiefly on the part of the captain, he touched the key of the main subject.

“Wandee, I am here upon a very important matter.”

“Cap’n’s hunt?”

“No; not my hunt. It concerns Wandee most.”

“Cap’n guess Wandee no take care heself?”

“Not so much that, if you were even-handed, but you are not; snares are set for you. You will be called to answer for what may be another’s fault, a mistake, or an accident, and I came to serve and save you if it is in my power.”

“Cap’n John save strength, save breath, Wandee take care Washakim.”

“No doubt of that, Wandee; and if that were all, I needn’t have ridden here to-night.”

“Ha! me know. Ole witch say all tings.”

“Witch or no witch, Wandee, you can’t know all. Tell me this, for time flies. It will soon be morning, and I

must ride in before daylight. We shall never get on at this rate. Did you kill Shonto?"

"Ha! Cap'n John, me kill Shonto."

"How? and why did you kill him, Wandee?"

"What for you know? You Shonto's brudder?"

"No, Wandee, but I have reasons for wanting to know about it. Tell me, if you will."

"Me no care. Shonto dead. Me no talk. Squaw talk. Squaw cry, me no cry; me glad, you guess."

"Wandee, we have hunted, we have fished, we have camped together. Storms, distance, and deep snows have been nothing to us so we might tire out the deer that had tipped its muzzle in defiance to white hunter and his hounds. Twice you have stepped between me and certain death. Once by Podunk, and once near 'Bumskit, when a furious bull moose had me under his sharp feet. And I must pay the debt. Bull moose has you now, Wandee. But you must tell me all."

"Cap'n John, Wandee no like big talk. No 'fraid knife, no 'fraid tomahawk. 'Fraid long tongue."

"But this is my battle, now. Bull moose has you, I say! Talk, and I will save you if I can."

"Ha! Cap'n John fight? Fight white brudder? Fight own men?"

"Yes, Wandee. But I shall fight with my tongue this time. Tell me all. You must have had some cause, some provocation. Say how it was, and you shall see whether I will fight."

"Ha! Cap'n John big brave. Got sharp tongue, hit

Injun in stomach. Hit bad, make Injun feel sick. Injun stan' fire, no stan' tongue. Ha! Injun feel pale. Cap'n John, me kill Shonto, me kill two Shonto, me like kill, me glad."

"But why did you kill him? What had he done to you?"

"Shonto say kill deer; me kill deer. Shonto no shoot. Me shoot deer. Shonto take him; me take deer, too. Shonto strike tomahawk. See big hole?" (parting the hair on his scalp). "Shonto strike 'gain, strike knife. See bosom all cut?" (parts the bearskin on his breast). "Big bleed. Me kill Shonto. Me glad. Me kill any man Great Spirit make live he strike Wandee. Me glad. Ha! Big talk you guess."

"Wandee, I am here to-night to warn you."

"Warn! Say 'gain! Who warn Wandee?"

"Well; we won't say warn. Say, will you go with me to the plantation on Tuesday of next week, sun up two trees' length? I will come and go in with you—the whites think you murdered Shonto, that is that you killed him for some grudge, some old spite, and without good cause, and they wish to try you for it as they would try a white man for some bad act; nothing else will satisfy them. They know the Washakims are ready to make trouble except you are tried for your life, for they think we instigated the murder. They dare not face the Hill Indians, but they will murder us, or some of us."

"Ha! White man love lan'. Washakim got lan'. White man love Washakim."

"Well, Wandee, we've hardly time to discuss that now. Go with me at the time named and I will promise at least, to place you back here at Wigwam as safe and well-to-do as now; for if they convict you, you shall appeal and I will act as surety for your reappearance. They 'll hardly want to contend against me."

Ha! Big talk. No much say, all talk. Me know. Me hear. Ole squaw make big fire. Ole witch squaw what you call. See face ole warrior, all dead long time. Ole warrior talk. Talk in tree, me no un'stan', squaw un'stan'. Talk low down; squaw say ole warrior talk in ear all way out ole squaw mouth. Say—white man want sell Wandee, buy lan' up Quinnapoxit. Ha! Ole squaw live two places all same time; squaw know, you guess."

"Wandee, you know Cap'n John, or you ought to. He has promised you, will you go with him? Or are you afraid of the white man?"

"Ha! 'Fraid? Me no 'fraid bear. Me sleep, me 'fraid bear. Tell white man come fetch Wandee. Tell deacon come. Me swap scalp."

"You will not go, then? Is that your answer, Wandee?"

"Ugh! Yes, me go. Deacon talk—hell. Talk fire; me no care. Bes' keep off han's; me make hell fire short time. You guess. Me go, Cap'n John."

"All right, Wandee. Sun up two tree's length. I will be here."

"Ha! Bes' go, Cap'n John. Day waking up. See! Stars go sleep over Quinsigamuck."

CHAPTER IV.

A SABBATH DAY SERVICE.

A BEAUTIFUL Sunday morning up here on Sagatabscot¹ Hill. Far away to the north, in the blue distance, we see that paragon of fire-blown symmetry, the leaden-hued Wachusett, and over the mountain's left shoulder, craggy, broken, storm racked,—gray old Monadnock shows his cleft scalp and wrinkled visage dimly in the haze of a New Hampshire sky.

West of north is a rich confusion of November's foliage, where the reddish brown of the mottled oak mingles with the deep green hemlock, the yellow chest-nut leaf, the glowing fire of scarlet maple, and the royal purple of the lowly sumach in a rich kaleidoscope. It is Asnebumskit Hill.

Due west is Rattlesnake,² and beyond, but still so much in the foreground as to make its color definite, are the sombre pines of Strawberry Hill,³ an emerald set in autumn's aigrette of more dazzling jewels.

This great log cabin, one story high, with floor cut into four rooms, windows set with bull's-eye glass,—

¹Sagatabscot Hill is south of the city (approached by Vernon Street) and east of Packachoag Hill.

²Rattlesnake Hill.

³Leicester.

glass five by seven, an inch thick in the middle, and tapering each way to an edge, greenish and semi-transparent; roof shingled with oaken splits; this is Digory Sergent's castle,—the house that Digory lives in, with the wide field in front and on either flank. This clearing, still covered with stumps five feet high (for the trees were cut by men standing on the crust of snow), this, one half of it, is Digory's corn field, and the other half, cut off from the corn by a zig-zag split pole fence, is his hay field.

The nine rail fence around the cornfield serves to keep the deer from trampling down the crop. The bears will enter, anyhow.

There is that monster chimney, but all the houses have such; and the well-sweep, but that is common also.

Outside, we see a pile of logs, and one of limb wood. Fifty cords. If Digory is provident or frugal with that mass of wood it will last him until after next year's haying time.

That low shed, open to the south and shingled like the house, is Digory's barn, where he folds his live stock. The hay he stacks near by. The five tons of mixed timothy and swale, with the seventy bushels of corn in bin, will carry his horses and four head of neat stock "through," if the Indians do not kill Digory and drive the "critters" off.

The fine matronly woman at the door is Mrs. Sergent, and by her side the sweetest pair of little, pouting lips and large blue eyes. Seven years old, is that little girl, Netty, of the pouting lips and blue eyes.

Coming from the milking shed, the "len-ter," from the barn, that superb specimen of womanhood turned the first corner, is Martha. It is time to begin to make the acquaintance of the family.

That seventeen years old lass, less stately, less mature than Martha, she with a face bright as the sunlit frost-cicles on the trees after a winter's rain storm, and with a step so graceful, so like a swan upon the water—Did you ever see a ghost? There are such things, and they are quite as real as the grosser forms of materiality they represent. Ghosts seem to glide, to swim, to float. But this was no ghost, and yet it had a ghost's prime attributes: the ethereal grace, the soundless tread, and all that awe-inspiring yet fascinating presence. This is Susan, second daughter of Digory Sergent. She who owns the best library in the plantation. She is just from school in Boston.

But here comes Sergent from the stable with the horses. Sergent is a man of sixty years, hair tinged with gray, thick necked, wide shoulders, heavy set, and very erect carriage. He is a bold, brave man. Too brave. A man may be brave to temerity. But Digory had cleared much land, had ploughed acres not a few, and neither white nor red man should dispossess him of the benefits of six years' toil.

Stand to it, Digory! but keep your powder dry, and your Sabbaths holy, and omit no prayers, for an old witch squaw has cast your horoscope, and from the vapors of a brew she saw a white arm stretched, and beckoning, and

heard a woman's voice whisper, "Come, Digory." It may mean nothing, but the white women of the plantation take counsel of that squaw; and so, Digory, did your first wife. The men all say "she is possessed," and were she white would burn her at the stake, but the women court her by stealth, and, without naming it, regard her as a seer.

Two horses now stand at Sergeant's door, and on the back of each a saddle and a pillion. Sergeant and wife step from a horse-block and seat themselves upon one. Martha takes the bridle seat upon the other, while Susan, the tall, yellow-haired girl with full, fair cheeks—red cheeks—red with mantling blood, red with the wind and sun, pats the neck of the horse, and half laughing, half imploring, says: "Now Martha, you might let me hold the rein on Jenny this one Sabbath morning. You know I ride well enough. Did n't I ride black Pompey up to Strawberry Hill? And John said I rode splendidly. You older sisters always want to lead off. It's only vanity. I don't think I should care so much for attention."

"Come, come, Susan. Do seat yourself and take the baby up behind you."

"Did you ever? You need n't call me the baby. I've just a good mind not to go now; Ma says I'm a little lady, I'm seven years old next Christmas."

"And so you are a lady, Netty; she should not call you the baby. But you can pay her off by and by. Folks

get to be old maids sometimes," said Susan, laughing at the shade of chagrin that seemed to follow the sally.

"You need n't teach her that now, Susan. The Lord knows it will come to her soon enough. One must always be either too young or too old in these little communities. I wish we had stayed in Boston. There now, just take your seat. The parson will call our names in meeting if we are late again."

Susan sprang from the horse-block to her seat on the pillion, took the child up behind her, and away they galloped toward the little village on the Bimelick, and the site of the Castle.

"Now don't you run so fast, Martha. Hold on tight, Sue. Oh, my! How it jounces!" and the child kept on babbling as they galloped down the bridle-path, forded the Bimelick at the foot of the hill, and sailed away in all the splendor of gay colored ribbons, whitened straw, and whiter home-spun linen,—for society at its outposts, and in that far-off day, had not merged into the wild extravagancies of costly calicoes at seventy pence per yard. China and the far East nearly or quite monopolized such delicacies as tea and coffee, and draperies superb as cotton print.

Some visiting English lord might donate to the governor's wife a calico dress pattern, and she in turn might draw from the hidden treasures of her locker a steeping of celestial herbs. Even others, well-to-do, might have in some deep recess of an oaken chest a metal case her-

metically sealed, wherein was lodged a pound of tea to serve the rare occasions of a life-time.

Our party had reached the plain, after crossing the river, when a magnificent black horse, nervously tossing head and mane, wheeled into line with the staid mare Jenny, and as the two animals bounded along the double pathway, the rider of the black relieved the pillion of the baby, who in high glee over the apparent preference in her favor, hailed her sister from her airy perch upon the stallion's withers: "Good-bye, Sue! I and John is goin' to meetin'."

The party is doing well, and we have other matters that demand attention.

Inside the stockade, sheltered from the wind, you might have seen thirty saddled horses—saddled, and pillioned for the most part—while in the Castle, the place of meeting, on one side were some forty bare head farmers standing, and upon the other side, their wives and children seated upon chestnut slabs arranged on wooden horses, listened to the Word of God as expounded by Calvin, with Parson Meekman for a proxy.

Upon an elevated platform, some three feet raised above the earthen floor, were a dozen praying Packachoags, and standing by them mutely meek and shy, as best becomes (I speak the then prevailing sentiment) the black slaves, whom God hath ordained from all eternity to be the helpers of his chosen people, were black Jake's wife, and children half a score. And in a far corner, as if unworthy (in their own conceit) here in the house of the

Most High, to risk attention by their non-conformity, two gentle Quakers with their meek-browed offspring, sat covered, waiting for that still, small voice—the spirit which is within them.

It is hardly competent here to give even the gist of the inevitable sermon. The congregation, poor souls, creed-bound were chained by dogmas which to them seemed stronger than if made of triple brass. And yet those same meek bondmen as they were, were haughty in their independence; owned nothing short of Deity their born superiors, and would spurn with foot a king's commiseration. They bowed to God and to God only. But it was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and this worship, so far from being to and of the God manifest, was narrowed down to a creed.

Perhaps I may with propriety, as we are here searching for truths over which the moss and rime of centuries are gathering, perhaps I may say, that the glorious incandescence of that state where justice purges without purifying, where caloric consumption is neither annihilation nor transmutation, where the worm, forever dying, dies not, where the frightful horrors of retribution for unbelief add ecstasies of delight to the regenerate soul of whom it was decreed from the foundations of the world "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord," as that soul peers from the bosom of hoary contentment across the gulf to mock at the soul of misfortunes—was fully and elaborately depicted to passive, creed-bound acquiescence, save, perhaps, in the minds of the loving and kindly Quakers, and of

two young men, one of whom did not care the snap of his riding whip what should come of to-morrow, so to-day was enjoyably spent, and the other, who had been taught in the broadest school of religious thought, where science and philosophy were admitted to be the keys which must finally unlock eternal verities.

The pastor had given out his text: "And the heathen will I give thee for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." And after dilating upon the beauties of the system inaugurated by Moses for the chosen people of God, a system by which was demonstrated the Divinity of Jehovah through an industrious application of the persuasive elements of fire and sword, even to the cutting off of every male thing that lived among such of the wicked idolators as dared lift hand in defense of country and home; and after making his identity so thoroughly manifest, as must needs appear when he ordered the slaughter of infants and mothers, decreeing of the virgins that to the victors belonged the spoils, to the end that the chosen should raise up only such seed as was after His own heart,—after so reasonably expounding the Scriptures in general, and the text in particular, as to make it glowingly apparent that the glory of God is measurably enhanced by the utter discomfiture of His enemies, and that enmity to God consists chiefly in the failure to believe that the children of Israel were of all men best qualified to fix His identity, he proceeded by numbered paragraphs or sections, through the "fourthly," and up to the "tenthly,"

“lastly” and “conclusively,” each of which might be called an able paraphrase of the section preceding, and at last came down upon his “finally” with a peroration irresistibly convincing, even if it were not logically correct.

“And now, my dear hearers, since it is patent to your minds that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, did, aforetime, through the mouth of his chosen prophet, declare that he would give them, you, his chosen people, anywhere, everywhere, in all time to come (for, my beloved hearers its application is universal among the elect. Hath He not said, ‘In me there is no change, nor shadow of turning’?), that He would give to His people, the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession? And inasmuch as he enjoined upon you to ‘cry aloud and spare not,’ which command is, by the way, peculiarly applicable to the present condition of this plantation, and by numberless examples instigated you, His people, to sweep His enemies from the face of the earth with the besom of destruction, you can but confess that it is conspicuously clear that two things lie palpably within the province of your earthly mission, to wit: First to declare the Word, and to baptize with water such as cheerfully acknowledge God and accept the atonement. Secondly: To fall upon such as persistently turn to their idols and smite them with the jaw-bone of retributive justice.

“But, my dear hearers, this must not, just at this time, be taken in literal acceptation, for here we have no Moses

to direct and no Joshua to lead, while the heathen, in league with the powers of darkness, are numerous as the sands of the sea-shore. Nevertheless, my brethren, it is our manifest duty to labor assiduously in the field to the harvesting of souls until, through the fullness of time and the ripeness of opportunity, we may separate the wheat and burn the impious chaff of idolatry, to the infinite exaltation and glory of God."

A touching benediction, in which the preacher—human—stooped from the threatening cloud of Mosaic jurisprudence, and in seeming metamorphose, gathered in his loving arms those same idolaters, as he melted from the icy horrors of Israelitish precept and example into familiar rapport with the tender and forgiving sweetness of Him who said,—“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

Divine services ended for the day and the farmers gathered into little knots, dispersed anon, and grouped again. A shadow of uneasiness was over them. They must and would discuss the merits of that sermon, for although the colonists were, as a rule, bigoted to a degree, and measurably creed-bound; though their whole faith rested upon God and the Scriptural teachings; yet in no sense would they accept the interpretation of a fellow, whether he be ordained or not, except so far as each individual judgment weighed the substance of a proposition, or conclusion, and mentally resolved its own verdict.

The farmers stood upon uncertain ground. Their preacher had maddened them by a sense of injustice,

as by imprecation he had invoked cruelty, and by instigation had prompted its execution upon undeserving ignorance. But what about that benediction, so Christ-like in its wide-spreading charity?

"Our parson is a standing riddle, an enigma; but there is more to this than he gives out," said Deacon Henschman to a group of farmers.

Our parson had scented blood—had peered into the future, aided or unaided, and had chilled beneath a cloud of undefined disasters. Men must be stirred. It mattered yet but little for direction. The hot blood that waits upon emotion is not soon cooled, but is ready to leap to action at a moment's call.

Perhaps no body of citizens of any country were ever so purely self-reliant as that early stock of English, Irish, and Scotch who, in the name of God, unfurled the banner of religious freedom over the new world. Perhaps no community of men ever so soon forgot the bitter lessons of intolerance, and bequeathed to their children the merciless rancor themselves had fled from.

Pity that those who claimed for themselves the largest religious liberty, could not have accorded to Baptist, Quaker, and Papist as much. But other than what ensued could not reasonably have been expected: for individual, sect, or class power, unrestrained by compact or constitution, inevitably merges into intolerance and oppression. And this colony, so far removed from motherland that she dared believe in, if not yet openly declare her independence, and shackled by no legal

enactments of her own devising, none but what she inwardly scorned, became, in matters out of statute, a law unto herself and answerable only to a transient wave of public prejudice or opinion.

Deacon HENCHMAN accosted RICE of Packachoag:

"How did you like it, Gershom? Did n't he make it pretty evident that we ought to take the intervalles? Don't you call it sound doctrine, Gershom?"

"It may, perhaps, be sound doctrine, but its mighty lame justice; and then again, the pastor turned a somersault in that benediction of his'n. I don't quite catch his drift."

"But don't you take into account the admonition to cry aloud and spare not? That means preach first and then sacrifice."

"Yes, Deacon, and I bring to mind another: 'Do unto others'—you remember the rest, Deacon."

"But the promise, you know, Gershom—the promise of inheritance. Its application seems unmistakable, and the word has gone out. It leaves us simple instruments in His hands; we obey the injunction and assume no part of the responsibility. This is God's warfare, Gershom. We are pitted against His enemies, and whether we unfurl the banner in the name of God or country, the enemy is no longer ours but His, or its, and we absolve ourselves of end and consequences under the solemn badge of duty. And don't you remember how it was declared that 'to him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be

taken, even that which he hath?' Truly, Greshom, this thing seems to have been foreordained."

"But I read, too," said Gershom, "'Feed my sheep,' and these 'ere Injuns are mighty nigh onto starvin', since the great drought. Mebbe you don't reckon them of the flock, but I take it they're men jest the same."

"Thee's right, friend Gershom," broke in Danson, the Quaker; "if God so loved the world that He gave His only begotton Son, that all through Him might be saved, shall we horrify Him by rapine and slaughter perpetrated upon His children? What say'st thou, friend Jeems?"

"Is it me yer askin'? Well sir, I, Jim Pike, afore God (if there is any), give it as my outspoken opinion that jestice is jestice, whether the subject's a nigger or an Injun. But 'bout that ar' 'tonement business I can't say; I don't take much stock in it. 'Pears like ter me the Creator must ha' been hard up for kalkerlation, if He couldn't git up a better scheme 'n that ter k'rect His own mistakes with. Mebbe'ts because I hain't got much larnin'."

"Tut, tut! Jeems. Thee's wandering from the subject, Jeems."

"You're an infidel, Jim. Yer sentiments are all right, Jim, till you strike scripter' an' then yer 'way off. But about this business, as sure as my name is Gershom Rice, I'm mighty glad I hain't been much exposed ter the weather without my hat, if a tanned hide disqualifies a man either for a free existence or for holdin' property."

Some er you fellers 'd be wantin' Packachoag if ye happened to catch me off color. I bought Packachoag of sober Injuns and I paid 'em the price, an' so sure as I'm an honest white man I can't see but their title to what they have left is jest as good an' clear as mine. I'll help ye buy on 'em Deacon, but I won't rob 'em? I lived a leetle better 'n two year¹ with them critters afore one on yer come ter keep me company, and I've got a whole scalp yit. They 've kep' faith with me, and I will with them. I tell ye, Deacon, that barrin' the matter of edication, that Wigwam Hill chief that we're agoin' ter try for murder, is the ekil of any on us, an' he's ter be trusted, too, if ye treat him right."

"Well, well, Gershom, we won't dispute about it. I want to be just as I hope to be judged. But I'm mighty 'fraid these Injuns will plant corn on the Quinnapoxit 'till Gabriel blows."

"And so they may for all I care, if they'll only be civil. When they make a fuss it'll be time enough for us to make reprisals. When they really deserve floggin', yer may count on me ter help give 'em Joshua. But it's nigh on ter milkin' time an' I've got better 'n four mile ter ride, so good evenin' to ye."

Many of the church goers were now in saddle. Digory Sergeant and his wife were mounted, and Digory, just before punching his boot heels into the mare's flank, called out, "Deacon, why don't you an' Gershom git on an'

¹Greshom Rice was the first permanent white settler in the plantation, and lived there, alone, for two years.

canter up ter Sagatabscot now an' then? Ye'll allus git wild turkey or venison for dinner. They dew say that all the game ye git down here in the settlement 's wood-chucks."

Gershom was just on the move when Digory's sally brought him to a halt, as also Curtis, Payne, and several more of the Hill dwellers. The opportunity to chaff the lowlanders was quite too good to be lost, but with a little bantering, and a semi-derisive smile they bade them good night, and galloped along their divergent bridle-ways to their airy perches among the hills.

Martha was now at mount upon the docile Jenny, and Netty's two arms were firmly embracing her waist, while her too short legs ran straight out upon the pillion, not long enough to bend at the knees over its edge.

"You don't like me any more, John," she said, as she saw Susan usurp her place upon the back of Pompey.

Pompey was now leisurely loping along the bridle-path, where now is Main Street, tossing his head and toying with his bit, as the loose rein dangled about the serpentine grace of his beautiful neck. The sober Sabbath afternoon seemed to have infused something of its properly peaceful quiet into the usually turbulent temper of the fiery beast.

"How did you like the preaching, John?" asked Susan, as soon as a little familiarity with the horse's gait assured her of a firm seat. She had ridden the horse before, but it was to the saddle, and a pillion seat over the haunches is quite another matter.

"I can't say I admired it, Sue. In fact I rarely pay

much attention to what he says. Of course I must attend church service, out of respect to my neighbors' prejudices, and to feign regard for their stable opinions I usually refrain from argument, or even comment."

The quasi deception may not seem commendable, but is it not better than to disturb settled and satisfying convictions with no hope of leaving anything in place of a broken idol but a painful uncertainty? It may be prudent enough with young lives where there is promise of time sufficient for unravelling and reweaving the web of a prejudiced faith, to speak plainly, but with older people the result, if results follow, are rarely satisfactory.

"Parson Meekman appeals too much to the passions and too little to the intellect to please me. He seems a strange compound of contradictory qualities. In the pulpit he is rash, impetuous and extravagant, while as a citizen he is cool, calculating, politic and conservative. He is often eloquent and always courageous. A natural orator and a born fighter. Good properties for outlying districts like this."

"Pa didn't like him at all, to-day, I'm sure. It is easy to know when he is crossed."

"The parson's pulpit methods are not calculated to foster good feeling among the Indians, and by creating discontent among them he seriously compromises the safety of the plantation. You saw those praying Indians in the slave box and by the door; and you may think that

because they pray they are sealed to their religious teachers, and so eminently trustworthy. But I can tell you they talk as well as pray, and the matter of this afternoon's discourse will be rehearsed in every body of the Nipnets, from Lancaster to Brookfield, before the sun sets twice. Pity he must lose his caution when he looses his tongue."

But something is happening at the Lake. The birch canoes come up by dozens from the extreme south. Something is strange in the color of their wampum, something unlike the quartz and colored pebble beads of the Nipnets. They are made up of minute sea shells and the little pearls of the native fresh water clam. They row with the double bladed paddle. Their head gear is unlike anything in all the Nipnet country. It seems a coronet of plumes rich with the dissolving hues of the wild turkey's bronze, the yellow breast of meadow lark and the red fire of the tanager. Some of the rowers now and then suspend their labors to converse in abbreviated utterances and hasty gesticulations. Their arms and faces are ablaze with war-paint, and their short, leathern hip-skirts are deeply fringed and ornate with blue and red upon the pale yellow ground of tanned buckskin.

One, who seems by general aspect, want of occupation, dress and demeanor, a chief among them, sits idly in a birch bark bow, elbow resting, chin placed in open palm, and looking steadily up the lake, occasionally shading his eyes from the glare of a setting sun; always silent, and

always peering northward toward Wigwam Hill, which looms up a murky mass against the glowing concave of a sunset sky. In the great gold buckle of his scarlet coronet is a long, black eagle's plume. Let Black Pompey walk or trot to Sagatabscot; we must see who comes to Wigwam Hill.

CHAPTER V.

KING PHILIP AT THE NIPNET LODGE.

UNDER the black crags that form the face of Wigwam Hill upon the lake side, upon the little lawn at its foot, the permanent camping ground of that branch of the Nipnets, were as has been said some fifty wigwams, while scattered in among the chestnuts, to north and south, from Coal Mine Brook to the foot of that steep descending line of boulders, were other wigwams and tent-like structures, making an aggregate of ninety lodges.

Indians in different parts of North America, although they followed the same general design in the construction of their habitations, that of planting poles in the earth to form a circle, and gathering them together near the top in shape of a double cone with the lesser above, and inverted, varied widely in the material used.

The Indians of the west availed themselves of the skins of the buffalo, so easily obtainable and so readily adjusted to form a covering which should break the wind, confine the heat and exclude the snow and rain, while those of the east and north, where no animals larger than the deer (if we except the moose and caribou which were never plenty) were to be found, devised, though with greater labor, a much cleaner and more durable covering by strip-

ping the bark entire from the large white birches, then common throughout the north, and applying it while green and easily manipulated.

The white birch was also utilized in the construction of vessels for containing water, both hot and cold, for in their rude culinary operations they were in the every-day habit of heating stones to redness and dropping them into water vessels, and so continuing until the meat or roots were reduced to a consistency suited to their palates.

They also wrought the birch bark in its fullness, as stripped from the tree, into canoes, airy as the shell of the nautilus, and in striking contrast with the clumsy southern dugout or the still ruder skin canoes of the western tribes.

So artistic were these northern Indians in fashioning the bark canoe, with its ashen framework of bows scarcely thicker than the bark itself, its graceful, up-curving ends, its ornate trimmings in highly colored deer's hide and porcupine quills (for they were adepts in the manufacture of gaudy-hued pigments), the carvings in the outer rind which left a scar that soon turned black, showing the design, always graceful, in strong contrast with the snow-white ground, together with its exceeding lightness, they produced a craft which floated on the water, beautiful and buoyant as the white vapor that cloaks the lake, or dallies with soft breezes in shreds, patches and ghost-like columns, idly wandering along the liquid floor, or waltzing to a ripple of the wind in an autumn sunrise.

Here in sight, as we stand upon the summit of the hill

in this year of our Lord seventeen hundred one, fifty and more of the birchen canoes, white as the snows of winter unpolluted by the mud and slush of civilization, glare from the blackness of the mountain's shadow as the last ruddy glow of sunset dissolves in the leaden hue of night.

To the north, between the enormous trunks of chestnuts that have shed their autumn harvests for two centuries of time, and to the south under those dismally black hemlocks—the great-grand nephews of which are thereabout to-day—the wigwams, half discernible, seem to glide about and gibber like spirits flitting among the gloomy shadows.

Within them the small boys, the male papposes, twelve years old and under, are dreaming of sunshine and gay feathers, and of bright wampum beads upon the naked bosoms of the mother squaw, dreaming of the little bow and quiver, of mimic tomahawk and fish spear; dreaming of tales of filing through distant, unknown, pathless woods, with star guides for the night, with moss and wind-warped trees to lead them in the day to where at midnight some sleeping foe is waiting to be scalped. But the squaws and the old men (there were never many of the last; they always managed to make their exit just when their usefulness was over), the squaws, and the old men, and that old squaw, the inevitable "she" who is half devil and half sorceress; half human and all witch; she who has outlived her generation and, half oblivious of the present, looks wisely into the future while dwelling in the past. Every community has them; they sit at pianos and at milking-stools, in palaces and huts of mud. They

dream by daylight and practice occultism at evening with the lights turned down; can turn a tea cup or a card to your bewilderment, read horoscopes in the abstruse lettering of your palm, brew specifics from unthought of weeds, or say to you "take up thy bed and walk," and you take it up and know not how nor why. She wills it, and the thing is done.

The old men and this old sorceress, fortune-teller, spirit medium, witch,—she who has the gift of seeing sights not practically seeable, and of passing in and out over the threshold of eternity, were gathered in an anxious but dead silent conclave, about a smouldering fire of burned-out brush-wood, waiting for something.

"I see," said the old squaw, in her native, stomach-spoken unpronounceability, words which in free interpretation might be rendered—"I see a big cloud of smoke—See many Indians—Indians from where the summer comes—Indians from the great snow country—Indians from where the sun sleeps. See Indians cover the whole hill—cover the plain over by the plantation. Indians come like bees when the winds blow down the hive-tree. I see old chiefs long time dead—up on the hill scarp—up on the black ledges. I feel the great hill shake—see a hundred warriors go out like a torchlight, go out in the cloud of smoke—go out in the hill shake." And as she finished the last sentence she sprang to her feet and wildly gesticulating, pointed here and there, and in a half whisper ejaculated: "See! see old warrior! Big heap warrior! No see? Umph! Got no eye." And with

the last word she tossed her head this way and that, without volition, and with spasmodic twitches of the muscles of face and shoulders she fell, going off into a swoon. May be it was a trance. Those who tamper with the occult touching the hereafter, and in pretense or otherwise hold intercourse with unseen entities, talk of trances, of temporary spirit disembodiment, and of spirit rehabilitation in shapely, ethereal luminosity.

She was gone; was rigid, cold, and to all appearance dead. But she had been so before, and the squaws looked at her and sighed, and passed on, and the men gave that grunt, that combination of guttural and nasal sound, which, given by an Indian, is not possible of interpretation, inasmuch as it is the ready accompaniment of every sentiment and passion of which he is capable.

Those seated on the ground by the wigwams now hear the dip of paddles, hear the crackling of twigs under the tread of many moccasins. Friendly feet that wear those moccasins, otherwise no sound would have come of them even though the woods were full.

Many strange faces in stranger paint and wampum now file past the smouldering fire, turn to glance at the dead squaw, and passing on form a circle. But never an eye among the sitters is turned to inspect them. Every muscle, every nerve, every passion is subject to the will that acknowledges a discipline which bars the semblance of curiosity. Stolid as statues they sit and seem to muse.

Foremost among those just landed is Wandee, and next

him a figure that has not its counterpart or likeness in all the Nipnet country.

It is a rare thing to see a Hercules among the Indians. They may be lithe and vigorous, swift they are, and for a moment strong ; but that grand development of muscle, the product of varied active labors, or of sports and exercises governed by scientific rules, which, under guidance, qualify a man for extreme physical endurance and endow him with abnormal muscular power in every part of his system, is in a degree wanting in the mere hunter, who, with rare exceptions, rises to the exercise of mentality only with a view to outwit or outspeed the lower animals, and when the purpose is accomplished, or abandoned as fruitless, falls back into blissful, unthinking repose. He never exercises with a purpose to develop.

He does nothing except in answer to the calls of emergency. He will not even force the earth to yield her increase. He will sooner starve, and trust to luck. And why not ? He has his domestic beasts—his slaves—his squaws, and what are they here for except to cater to his needs and his passions, and to breed warriors ?

But here was indeed a thorough and unmistakable athlete. Not one of the stereotyped, American aboriginal men ; squatty, heavy-shouldered and abnormally muscular, uncouth, ugly in appearance, with closely shaven head, and scalp lock trimmed into the semblance of a militia man's pompon. The long, straight, black hair, parted in the middle of the forehead, was bound by a coronet of red-stained buckskin, ornate with pearls of the

fresh water clam, crystals, the quills of the porcupine and minute sea-shells, and that was clasped in front by a magnificent gold buckle, the present, or lootage perhaps, of some well-to-do white man.

Depending from the scarlet band were beads in various colored fringes, and beads in graceful and elaborate tracings crossed it, while surmounting all one bronze black eagle plume in the buckle fixed awry, proclaimed him chief, or leader of some clan of the confederation—a mugwump in the tribal nation. A red, sleeveless, flannel shirt, wrought in graceful designs and hieroglyphic figures of some occult meaning is bound at the waist by a wampum belt. Close, fringed, leathern leggings, and bead-wrought, brown tanned buckskin moccasins complete the stranger warrior's dress, while a beautifully polished steel hatchet with long, conic head, suspended by a loop in the body belt is his only weapon. He was approximately thirty-five years of age, less in height than Wandee, his fairly wide shoulders, massive chest and neck,—neck joined with graceful sweep to the figure below, the perfectly erect carriage, so unusual to the race, the full, but not huge development of muscles in the limbs, proud free step and haughty air, his great black eyes showing much of the white against the yellow redness of his skin, and beaming more with dignity than fire, gave him a commanding appearance exceeding even that of his lordly host.

And this stranger, the great red-man who locked his name in perpetuity to the history of the New World, who

died a hero martyr and a patriot outlaw—the terrible fate of whose descendants is a perpetual blot upon the otherwise fair escutcheon of our brave, but too stern fathers—is none other than the renowned Philip of Mount Hope, king of the Wampanoags.

A pow-wow had been held the night before at Hassinomissitt (Grafton) at the south end of Lake Quinsigamond, where it breaks away in the Nipnap River, and runs in rapid cascade-broken flow toward Narragansett Bay, and by invitation of the Quinsigamond chief, who had been in attendance, King Philip was, for this night, the guest of Wandee. The subject of the pow-wow had been vengeance upon the white aggressors. Not that the Hill chief had been lured into the brooding conspiracy; not that he was ready or willing to break faith with the white man who, but for the episode of Shonto's demise, had ever been his friends; but that the great warrior, the great politician,—renowned for wisdom, renowned for courage, renowned for his surpassing eloquence, had claims at least, upon his hospitality.

Stirring appeals had been made at Hassinomissitt. Speeches such as Indians make under a fervor of excitement, when gesticulation is the supreme factor, and oral communication is condensed into connecting links of here a metaphor and there a pungent, picturesque simile. They had been made by the various chiefs assembled, but not by Philip. Philip's manner was calm and collected; his reasoning clear and logical; his appeals forceful and persuasive without the shadow of personal excitement,

but withal so subtle, so conclusive, so convincing and so inspiring, that while the imperturbable master of reason and discourse was in perfect balance and self-poise, his hearers, by exercise of some magic,—unappreciable, undefined, went wild with an enthusiasm utterly unaccountable in consideration of their ordinarily stoical or stolid temperaments.

The chiefs of Tehassit, Asnebumskit, Washakim, Pegan, Quaboag, and Wachusett were there and said their say, with more or less ardor, chiefly according as they had more or less grievance to charge upon the whites. Philip's speech was purely oral, beginning with a precise, but concise statement of the object of the gathering, which was to consult as to the best means to pursue in gaining redress for manifold wrongs perpetrated by their white neighbors.

The burden of the conference, if that may be called a conference where one master spirit dominates all minds as the whirlwind sometimes leads a storm, was war; although as yet Philip had not said it, had not named war. So far it seemed only hovering in space, like some weird fatality, an unspoken premonition. His words were soft and kindly, but the sweet-mouthed blandishments of the astute Wampanoag were but the voluptuous, sinuous coilings of the serpent, or the mild saliva that facilitates disaster. The glittering eye told more truly than the tongue how deadly was the scheme in contemplation. It told of war; war so desperate, so relentless, that nothing less could suffice than utter extermination,—the wiping out of

every vestige and drop of white blood, from the white bear country on the north to where the stone-house dwellers in the south still gloried in recited traditions of Montezumian magnificence under the vertical rays of a winter sun.

And Wandee had heard the silvery tongue of Philip rolling as fluently, as grandly, in the Nipnet dialect as if its syllables had been his infant lullaby. It had been poured into his listening ears as sweetly as the musical symphony of that paragon of wildwood vocalism, the brown thrush.

Nothing could exceed in roughness the Nipnet tongue, as ordinarily spoken. But in the treatment of language, nicety of selection, point, perspicuity, and conciseness of expression, aided by a rhythmical habit in arrangement, can make poetry out of uncouth, local idioms, and music out of jargon.

Wandee, while he had declined to accept Christianity of the white man, and had utterly refused to exchange his worship of the Great Spirit, the all-pervading, all permeating, active, intelligent essence of life, for that of a personality of whom he was told he was the image; that to him, incomprehensible combination of three distinct and yet inseparable personalities, had yet pledged himself to bury forever the hatchet. He could not change his form of worship, nor repudiate its object. Probably his incapacity to make one and three identical by combination or interchangeability, had confused him, and he preferred his simple faith which, while it offered no complex problem

for solution, admitted him into the immediate presence of Deity, and gave him assurance of a life to come as the natural concomitant of an indestructible spirit existence that is,—an indestructibility vouched for by repeated personal manifestations and common asseveration of such as pass back and forth from the spirit land ; and in the necessity for appeal he preferred the direct method to submitting to the incumbrance of an intercessor.

He gave his mind no disturbance on account of the white man's religion, but he could stand by his pledges.

It was no purpose of the great chief on the occasion of this visit to Quinsigamond to make converts to his way of thinking, or by word or act to show himself other than the friendly guest of Wandee; for however he might wish to exert his influence for the cause so near his heart, even an Indian's idea of etiquette forbade so untimely an introduction of the subject.

He was at Hassinomissitt through preconcertion, and for a purpose, but he was at Wigwan to enjoy the hospitality of a generous and promising young host.

Already he had shaken peace to its foundation stones by his harangue in the valley below, and the fires of revenge and insubordination to a stranger's dictation he had there kindled, were being carried to every lodge, from the mouth of the Assabett River to the junction of the Connecticut and Chicopee.

He reserved his great powers of persuasion and instigation, and the terrible force by which he was able to

raise to a tempest of tumult the minds of men, for occasions worthy of his genius.

Probably no Indian chief of that or any other age so thoroughly combined the wisdom of the sage, the courage and valor of the hero, the persuasive eloquence of word and action that roll together with rhythmic flow toward the accomplishment of a purpose fixed by a will unalterable and unconquerable, and the subtle craft of the statesman and diplomat. Master by birth and election of the little peninsula to the south of Wat Cheer, with a few hundred Narragansetts as tribal attaches, he had in a twelvemonth, by force of his genius, aided by his wonderful linguistic attainments—for he was master of all the northern dialects—sundered the bonds of oath, interest, friendship and religion between seventy per cent. of all the red men through a territory of five hundred miles square, from the St. Lawrence to the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, and from the Penobscot to the Alleghanies and Adirondacks. The rude tribes of the Canadas, and that wild, warlike, aboriginal terror—the bloody Mohawks, had sworn out of the curling smoke of the calumet, an everlasting fealty to the polished demi-god of Mount Hope.

Take one more look at the lordly sachem, as his splendid figure gracefully bows good night to the scarcely less grand presence of the young chief of the Quinsigamonds and retires within the walls of the council wigwam for a night's repose.

We shall see him once again before the sun of his

day of vengeance and blood shall set in an evening of misfortune and despair.

By earliest daylight the roaring flames of a huge camp-fire, where spitted upon leaning stakes of green walnut the sputtering fat of wild goose, and the savory odor of crackling, hissing, brown haunches of venison give promise of generous feast. But for the method of feasting, it amounts to but this, with king or with witch—for that wiry old woman is here (the one we left dead, or who seemed so in the evening, is here, and is muttering or gazing, with face upturned, peering off into space). Slice after slice is cut with a scalp-knife from the breast of the fowl; and with angling incision at top, long strips are jerked from the venison and devoured by the feasters, standing. King, chief and warrior as one are fed at this open air, want of a table.

The birches are launched, and are flying over the placid waters of the beautiful lake to disappear among the many islands, but to reappear as they skim the swift-flowing waters of the sparkling Nipnap,¹ and float away in the blue distance to the Narragansett and Mount Hope.

¹ Nipnap, the Blackstone River.

CHAPTER VI.

IN THE TOILS.

HAVING before this given a succinct view of the person and character of Eugene Archer, we will now proceed to describe him more minutely, in order that a closer acquaintance with him may leave us less susceptible to the sensation of surprise at any general or especial breach of good faith or manly decorum.

He was a young man of excellent family, one with whom John Wing had become partially acquainted while going the rounds with his old school companions in the seaport town of Boston. One whose father, an English trader of no inconsiderable fortune, acquired partly in London, considerable in the slave trade between the coast of Africa and the West Indies, and somewhat in his later venture as ship owner and colonial merchant.

The elder Archer stood high in the rank of respectability.

He, Eugene, had already manifested an innate adaptability for becoming an integral part of the great balance wheel of American institutions and of that popular liberty which was already beginning its century of incubation. He had shown unmistakable aptitude for squandering the accumulations of his latest progenitors, to the end that it might be reaccumulated by more frugal hands,

thereby defeating the ends of the original purpose,—the acquisition and continuance of the power of wealth in perpetuity.

Eugene's self was an intimate comminglement of good breeding and bad morals; of forward politeness and lurking vulgarity; of presumptive innocence, assumption of integrity, and covert rascality.

I have said that his height was five feet ten. He was slightly but admirably proportioned, supple rather than strong, and he had more hardy endurance than ready physical force. He was erect in figure, manly of bearing, quick of mental apprehension, bold to extremity where he had a purpose to effect, and just the model out of which to evolve the perfect man were it not for the moral poisons which tainted the blood from unremembered ancestry; that potency for evil which reaches back from the hereafter—that moral Kraken recrossing the Styx and involving a soul in its merciless tentacles. Or it might be, indeed, that he had imbibed corruption from personal inoculation. I don't know.

The features of Eugene's face were nearly perfect. That is to say they were balanced. The type is of but trifling consequence, so easy it is to take some misplaced, and therefore ugly feature, and by matching up produce a paragon of beauty. The cherished result is the effect of combination. There is no type will stand for a moment as ideal. But Archer's nose was straight, or nearly so, and from its connection with the brow projecting somewhat from the nearly vertical line of his not

high forehead. His chin was, if anything, too heavy and inclined to turn up, nostrils large, eyes dark gray and rather full, mouth medium in size, slightly elevated at the corners, and an inclination to pout with the underlip. The graceful column of a wide-based neck extended to the chest and shoulder without the indication of an angle. His hair was dark and somewhat wavy, but was clipped too short to be considered just the thing by the long-haired yeomen of a country district, and a silken, dark mustache, the badge of budding aristocracy, was the scorn of all mature respectability. Such things were permissible only in case of a Portuguese or Spaniard.

As has been said, John Wing made the acquaintance of this man at the clubs in Boston, and at Eugene's persistent importunities had allowed him, by formal invitation, to accompany him to the plantation as his guest. Not that the captain would have been, personally, in any degree averse to his company, but the young man's foppish appearance, his elegant habits, and, what was worse than all, his custom of frequent change of apparel, was sure to arouse contempt in the planters.

Could he have followed the example of young Wing, who in his periodical visits to Boston most fully affected all that capricious fashion demanded, but on his return put off, as the snake discards his skin, the gewgaws of elite society and settled down to corduroy or homespun, or even to a suit of modest velvet with a single change, these old fellows would have taken him to their bosoms, after having taken the measure of his general character

and capacity, and provided both were of the current quality.

The captain knew how it would be with the impudently independent Bostonian. But there was no help for it now. He had accepted courtesies, and as a gentleman must hold himself in readiness to return them.

However, the feeling partly subsided as the two became better acquainted on their horseback journey to the interior, for the visitor's good sense and wit, his superior skill in horsemanship (few people in the older communities realize how far a glorious, long-continued canter, by expert horsemen on high-mettled animals, tends to bring two souls into unison), and above all the reckless daring exhibited by him as, in passing through what is now Watertown, a surly bull drove at them on the road, and this Eugene, never so much at home as in the presence of danger, teased and goaded the brute, cutting him across the eyes with his riding-whip, wheeling his nimble mare to elude a charge, only to renew the torture, until the worried and despairing beast bellowed a surrender and beat a hasty retreat; the adventure, I say, had fairly won over the captain to cordial liking; and within a week he had made for the new comer many friends among the tough old planters who affected to believe all fashionable traps were arts of Satan's own devising.

Among the places where the captain introduced him was the house of Digory Sargent, and from the moment the new man first looked upon the rustic beauty—the second daughter (rustic he took her to be until a slight

acquaintance taught him that in the matter of education at least, in both letters and deportment she was fully his equal), his subtle, unscrupulous mind began to scheme for her undoing.

Could he but get her to Boston, there were ways enough by which her identity could be concealed while he chose to revel in the charms of a new mistress, and should he tire of her and desire to cast her off for mere change's sake, or to avail himself of fresher charms, her shame would be its own, and his best safeguard.

More than once, when the captain was to be occupied at home, Eugene found excuse in his love of horsemanship, to make excursions into the country by the many bridle-paths and Indian trails, and invariably brought up at Sagatabscot Hill. If his call chanced to be alluded to at the captain's next visit, it excited no surprise. He was merely taking a whirl among the trails, and nothing could be more natural than to call, if he chanced to be near. Besides, so bold, so frank, so valiant a spirit,—could he plot harm? Preposterous! Being so introduced, and seeming so much in favor with Captain Wing, he was always a welcome guest and could at all times prolong his stay and even stroll about the clearing in Susan's company without occasioning especial notice.

It was on one of these occasions, when they had passed beyond the usual limit of a walk, that the rake began a bolder assault upon her affections than he had hitherto deemed prudent. In her artless innocence her ready tongue had rattled away as humor or as fancy prompted.

Her mirthful, ever-laughing eyes had often met Eugene's with what might be love, might be her sweet good-nature only. A more complete adept at love lore than was Archer, even, could hardly have divined its real import. So bewitching was she in her ways, while all unconscious that it might work harm, that Eugene found at last that he himself had been entrapped in the very snare he had set for her; for while he had at first regarded her as a mere toy that he might play with and at will discard, he found himself now consuming with a real love. A cruel, fierce, intoxicating fondness that was fast weaving bonds about the slayer as unyielding as the web with which he had purposed to enthrall his victim.

She had unconsciously twined about him a mesh he could not break and in the end he must succumb or sacrifice. If sacrifice,—then, vulture-like, he might rise cold and cruel from the moral death his arts had compassed and his passions fed upon.

What in him had been at first but morbid lust, merged into that baser comminglement of love and lust which remorselessly destroys the shrine it confesses but will not worship at, and knows neither conscience nor constancy.

But, failing in every effort, art, and wile to awaken in her affection or sentiment other than a forced regard for the friend and guest of her affianced; failing in repeated attempts to divert her attachment by arousing in her a passion of jealousy, or by posing as an admiring, sympathetic friend of one who was at best but sharing a divided love; he

merely made her uneasy, unhappy. Jealous she really became; for Eugene's statements and insinuations of his friend's irregularities in Boston, a scheme he had woven of half fact and half fiction,—just so much fact as could be made demonstrable by tagging together of casual remarks, and partly of deftly interpolated fiction, hardly admitted the supposition of constancy.

Yet every inuendo and presumption of evil on the part of the captain, as thrown out by Eugene, was so covertly guarded by a plausible alternative in the mouth of the traducer, that she still clung to the hope that after all everything might bear investigation and be capable of explanation. But such hope, at the moment of its inception, was doomed to be shattered into a thousand inconsistencies by some countermining device of the arch maligner.

Still, so persistently did she beat about her and clutch at shadows of excuses and palliations, that Eugene at last wearied of inventing disparagements, and turning from the system in disgust set his heart upon more atrociously effective measures for forever separating the pair, each from its idol.

CHAPTER VII.

TRIED FOR HIS LIFE.

IT was the tenth of December, and December sat down heavily upon the plantation. The snow was already eighteen inches deep upon a level, and the checkered sky of the previous night, together with the rapidly moving grey scuds, like pickets thrown out from the long, black bank of clouds in the southwest horizon, seemed to portend an additional encumbrance of this apparently useless material.

The old English clock that stood in the corner of the tavern hall and at intervals of long seconds wagged its lazy pendulum which hung suspended by a five-foot rod, now told the hour of nine. And to-day was trial day for the proud young chief of the Quinsigamonds, and the hour was fixed at ten A. M.

Already nearly every man in the plantation had made his appearance, and several had come in on snowshoes from Lancaster, Brookfield and Marlborough. Besides the men, many women were in attendance. Some came perhaps out of mere curiosity to witness the holding of the first court ever convened between Boston and New Amsterdam.

Some came to look again for the hundredth and last time

upon the handsome Nipnet chief whom even Captain John Wing, the idol of female Quinsigamond,¹ had not hesitated to speak of admiringly and to make companion of his wildwood sports by summer and winter.

Among the people assembled were the Henchmans, Paynes, Noyses, Rices, Prentices and at least fifty others, and last to come, but not least in the estimation of all, particularly of the grown sons of the planters, were Martha Sargent and that large-eyed, sweet-mouthed glory of femininity, Susan of Sagatabscot, who seemed, as was remarked by several solicitous matrons, very much paler than usual, while about her eyes was a tinge of illy concealed distress which belied her laughing mouth and cheery volubility of tongue.

She had been troubled of late, but she had promised secrecy to Eugene Archer, and had now rallied upon the practice of that art which is instinct in the sex when jealousy prompts a woman to detect a fault. She could smile with lips and eyes and could prattle with her tongue even while her heart was breaking.

It was now nearly ten o'clock and the prisoner was not at hand, but Captain Wing had pledged himself for his appearance, and Captain John was absent. They will surely come. Yes! they come. Over the hilltop to eastward and close at hand, over the top of the crustless snow directly in the line of Wigwam, light as the tread of that flock of snowbirds, sweeping and soaring and stooping

¹ Quinsigamond tribe, and Quinsigamond plantation must not be confounded.

in front of them, light as that breath of wind that whirls the feathery snow flakes in their faces; over the hill top, striding upon green hide basket-ribbed Indian rackets, come the captain and Wandee wrapped in their mantles of bear-skin.

Seventy men are now in the Castle Tavern eagerly waiting to see the lasso of law cast over the neck of the first victim.

The deacon, Trial Justice by virtue of appointment at Boston, stood in the bar room, running over the jury panel, and mentally reviewing, so far as memory would serve him, legal forms and processes which he had industriously sought out and endeavored to memorize within the last few days. Cogitating he was, how far a Trial Justice himself might be amenable to law for irregularity in the form of dispensation, even where the culprit was only an Indian.

Steaming hot mugs were now resting upon the bar, having been replenished by Black Jake in the master's absence, and were waiting, as were a score of hot rum toddies, for the Justice, the most important man in the plantation, for this day at least, to institute a proceeding not directly in line with the business of the day.

The planters were coming in from the piazzas, blowing their fingers and rubbing their ears, and were evidently growing impatient, which, the Justice perceiving, he lifted his mug and wished them a happy return of the day, and possession of the intervalles in the interim, after which he called out—"Attention!" and began to call the roll

of his jury, but had hardly uttered the first name before observing a fault of omission.

"Step forward as you answer to your names and fall into platoons at salute!" was given as an order, and the men obeyed.

Form, however, went for but little, as the prisoner was only an Indian, and after excusing some of the list, among them the two Rices, who confessed to prejudice in the prisoner's favor, and Sergeant for predetermining in his mind as to guilt or innocence, others were excused for having expressed opinions, and all such claimed that exemption was legal, although assured by the Justice that it mattered but little, as the prisoner was "only an Injun." But substitutes were found; not, however, without including Black Jake, who, although a slave, and not eligible in ordinary cases, was fully competent in this.

The Court now adjourned to the Castle, where a roaring fire had been built in anticipation of the event.

A fire had never been kindled in that house for the comfort of church service since the Castle was built. Faith and zeal might relax under the soothing, satisfying influence of diffused caloric.

One zealot in the congregation had said "it is a feeble religious flame that cannot keep one's toes from freezing in the House of God."

To suffer, was commendable sacrifice; to enjoy, could only savor of sacrilege.

All was now arranged. The Justice occupied the bench that did service as a pulpit on the Sabbath days,

and the trial commenced and proceeded with solemnity, and as much regularity, as much adhesion to barristic forms as might be reasonably expected of men wholly unused to the legal dispensation of justice. To be sure, most of them had attended upon fence-post floggings,¹ with the black-snake horsewhip, when justice was administered by the edict of an improvised jury, to some thieving red-skin, or a lazy lout of a white man who had made himself obnoxious to the people of Marlborough or Sudbury—from whence most of them came—by lying drunk too many days of the week, thereby jeopardizing the interests of the community that might, if the thing was continued, be called upon to aid in the family's support.

There were no Washakims in attendance as witnesses, at this trial, although the tribe was in reality the plaintiff in the case, and a dozen of them had been till now, loud-mouthed with damning evidence, and had been duly cited to appear. One of them had found the body, another the arrows with heads such as no Indian but Wandeé used, and several others had sundry tokens upon which to base a theory adverse to the prisoner.

As no Washakims were present, no evidence,—not even circumstantial, could be adduced, at least none ordinarily competent. But, as hearsay and current rumor were fully admitted, not indeed as good and sufficient, but for all the jury might consider them worth, and as the general

¹ Fence-post trials, ending in public flogging and ear clipping were not altogether infrequent as late as the date of the Revolution.

impression that Wandee was guilty, could not, in the absence of counsel to question, or judge to rule, otherwise than bias an uninstructed jury, it was easy to see during the trial that a tide was rising which was likely to float the prisoner off into conviction.

The stories and little items of hearsay having originally a possible indirect bearing upon the case, had, by repetition, like snowballs rolling down a hillside, gathered substance as they ran and now assumed imposing bulk. And they were poured unreservedly into the ears of the jury, however irrelevant or incompetent; and as he or she had rendered his or her testimony, he or she continued without abatement, except as halting to take breath, borrowing from conjecture, probability, and possibility, colors inimical to the interest of the man on trial, as people will who are unused to opening their mouths to the public. If they have the hardihood to commence they usually rattle on, pleased with the music of their emanations, and delighted with their new and important conspicuity, never knowing when to stop, but, like syphons, they run until they have exhausted the fountain head.

The trouble was chiefly with the Judge, who, although in all respects a sound man, was just now out of his element. Or, possibly, his mind having predetermined the result, was at present occupying itself with prospective visions of cornfields along the Quinnapoxit.¹

¹ The valley of Quinnapoxit is in the town of West Boylston, now soon to be flooded and occupied as the great reservoir for supplying Boston with water.

The case was evidently going solidly against the prisoner, and many an eye in the assembly dropped a tear upon a bosom where palpitated a heart that loved mercy more than what men call legal justice; that held human life at a higher value than wide cornfields; hearts that, without the aid of heads, without the necessity for duly weighing evidence, jumped, through the faculty of innate perception, to a juster conclusion than acumen with its cold discernment, than wisdom with its doubtful scale of weights and measures.

And now the evidence was all in, with the exception of that of the prisoner at the bar, and he had, so far, declined to testify; which fact, in the mind of the Court if not of the jury, conclusively nailed his guilt to the wall; for what could be more likely than that the trembling homicide, in view of his close proximity to the land of the hereafter, should shrink from falsifying under the all-seeing eye of the Great Spirit,—whoever that might be.

More than one juryman looked knowingly at the judge, and throwing an askant look at the prisoner, solemnly raised his eyes toward the rafters with a look of "of course he did it."

The chances are decidedly against you, Wandee. The chances are that a Washakim stake fire will toast your limbs after you have run the gauntlet, when every squaw is at liberty to heap indignities upon you. But happily, so far, not a Washakim—unless in disguise—is

here to exult over your conviction and his pleasing anticipations.

For some reason they have kept aloof. Indians never like to meet large bodies of white men, unless the whites are asleep. As a rule, Indians are skulkers. Bold men among them are rare, and when such appear they instinctively lead, and are, through instinct, followed. They need no election. They are master spirits and gravitate to place.

If no unforeseen circumstances occur in your favor,—you proud, Hill Indian, you are as good as doomed. You must run that terribly humiliating gauntlet; must suffer worse than a hundred deaths, as those squaws, standing in double line and each armed with a walnut withe will spit upon you as you pass between them; will lacerate your hide; and you, bound by the bleeding wrists, are helpless to resent it. And then they will send you up in a chariot of fire, for the white men will not execute you but will give you over to the tribe whose chief you have murdered.

But the Justice is on his feet.

“It is within the limit of my power as Justice of the Peace for this plantation, to dispose of this case without resort to the jury form of trial prescribed for the white man; but, as the prisoner stands foremost among his race in talent, power and respectability,—if the term respectable is in any degree applicable to an Indian, I have thought it expedient, somewhat in deference to Brother

Wing, to give him such benefits as civilization accords to a Christian. In short, to give him a trial by a jury of our peers, notwithstanding he is only an Indian.

"Of course, Mr. Foreman and the jury, you can but appreciate the Christian charity hereby extended, especially as you take into account the fact that he is yet a heathen,—never having been baptized.

"And now that the evidence is in on both sides, if indeed the case of an Indian can have more than one side, you must confess gentlemen of the jury, that it looks mighty bad for the Injun.

"To sum up the evidence would seem wholly superfluous, even were the Court so disposed, for the Court holds, and we submit it to you, gentlemen of the jury, that nothing could be clearer than that the prisoner at the bar is guilty of murder in the first degree. I had no doubt of it from the very first. If it were indeed possible that any lingering vestige of a doubt could still remain in your minds, gentlemen of the jury, such doubts might be speedily dispelled by resort to the proof positive which comes of that ancient and lawful system of ducking in the mill pond, which, as you are well aware, by repeated experience down in Marlborough and by long established precedent, will, if after having seemed to drown he can be resuscitated and restored immediately to full vigor, give strong assurance of innocence, and if he die, why, being guilty, he deserves his fate.

"But, gentlemen of the jury, my sympathies with the prisoner in this trying moment forbid that I should force

him to the water ordeal, even were it earlier in the day and we had time.

"Has any one anything to say why we should not proceed at once to hang the culprit to the Tavern sign-post, or otherwise dispose of him as may seem in best accord with the interests of the plantation? Of course we must wait until the jury return a verdict, for however we may regard the matter of guilt as a foregone conclusion, the jury must be entitled to respect from the Court.

"And now, if any white man has aught to say against passing immediate sentence, let him speak, or forever after hold his peace.

"Captain John Wing has the floor. The jury will please give their attention. Right dress, eyes right, weight of the body upon the ball of the foot. Steady, front. Go in Cap'n."

The captain was already upon his feet, and not a little embarrassed by the situation. All eyes were turned upon him as his name was called, and he scarcely yet out of his teens, and a novice in this new position, was—if indications were to be regarded, to undertake to overturn a barrier of prejudice already established in the minds, not only of the jury, but of the seventy or more gray-haired men and women whose faces now seemed to wear the unrelenting sternness of a public executioner.

He began:

"As advocate for the prisoner at the bar it is my privilege to call a witness in the person of the prisoner, even though he be but an Indian."

"Is it lawful sir, to place an Indian on the stand to testify?" interrupted the Judge.

"I think it is lawful Your Honor, in any Court in Massachusetts Colony, for a man of any color to testify in his own defence. Wandee, please stand up."

The Indian had no sooner got upon his feet than he was sternly questioned by the Judge.

"Have you been sworn, sir?"

"Indian no swear, white man swear 'nough."

"Do you believe in the Holy Trinity? In God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost?"

"Too much lar'n; me no 'stan."

"Do you believe in the Bible?"

"Do' know him. B'lieve Great Spirit."

"Do you believe in God?"

"Which God?—White man got t'ree Gods."

"We mean the one God—Jehovah."

"Never heard las' God, 'at make four. Injun got Great Spirit, white man got God. All same."

"Who is the Great Spirit? Did you ever see him?"

"Great Spirit—Big t'ink—up dar—Down here—All roun'—me know him. See him in sun—see him in tree, see him in Deacon, leetle mite bit, you guess."

"You may have the witness, Captain. If he has n't learned to swear we won't teach him."

"Wandee," asked his counsel, "did you meet Shonto upon the day and date when it is alleged you caused his death?"

"Me meet Shonto."

"And what happened when you met Shonto?"

"Me kill Shonto, me kill Shonto dead."

"That settles it!" said the Justice. "We read, 'out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee.' There is nothing more to say in this case. We mustn't show the prisoner the disrespect to question his assertion. I think the case may now go before the jury upon the confession. There wan't a doubt in my mind from the first."

"One moment, your Honor!" exclaimed the captain. "We mustn't be too hasty in this matter. I have the witness and have not done with him yet. Wandee why did you kill Shonto? Tell the Court how it happened. Tell it without much questioning. Try and explain it to the Court. You may tell it in your own way."

"No big talk, Cap'n. Me no like big talk."

"But you must talk now, Wandee. Talk for me, talk to me. Never mind these people. It is you and Cap'n John, now. Look at me and talk."

"Yes, me talk. Me talk yes. Me in woods. See deer. Deer run. Me shoot, kill deer. Go fetch him. Shonto out come. Me know where, me don't. Shonto take deer. Wandee take deer 'way off Shonto. Shonto fight."

"Well, you fought, but who struck the first blow, Wandee?"

"Me no strike. Shonto strike here. Big, long cut. See? Shonto strike two time. Bad, strike bad; cut stomach all open. See? Big, much bleed. Me mad,

Me drop deer. Strike Shonto one time, two time, strike, keep strike. Shonto dead. Me glad."

The last expression, considering the time and place, was quite too bold and savored too much of a spirit of satisfied revenge to suit the ideas of the deacon in his present exalted position of Justice of the Peace. The prisoner must be reprimanded.

"Does not the prisoner at the bar realize that the killing of Shonto was bad enough without exulting over the crime? The prisoner must retract, or be held to answer for contempt. Are you not sorry, Injun?"

"Me glad! Deacon strike Wandee, me kill Deacon. Kill any man, white—red—all. Me no take strike. Me kill, you guess."

"These heathen are incorrigible. You can go on with the witness, sir."

"What did you do with the deer, Wandee?"

"Me skin deer, take saddle, go home to wigwam. Squaw all hungry."

"When you had taken the hide from the deer did you observe anything peculiar or unusual about the wound?"

"Me see two hole; hole bote side. Me t'ink ole witch cut 'em. Ole squaw all roun'. Come—go—no see 'em. Me no shoot two arrer."

"You may be seated, Wandee."

"Gentlemen of the jury—I know little of law or of the forms and processes by which it is administered. I have so far seen more of camps than courts of law, but I have in mind a legal axiom or two that may serve me in

some stead, and will aid me where I might otherwise go far astray.

"You have heard the evidence offered by the government, with a view to fix upon the prisoner the crime of murder.

"You have heard the open confession of the accused, and it is duly admitted that Shonto came to his death at his hand, and if the act of killing, under any and all circumstances is to be denominated murder, then it is useless to enter a plea in this prisoner's behalf, for, as the Court has suggested, out of his own mouth has he been condemned. But before passing sentence upon the accused, or even forming an opinion, which, if unanimous, is when uttered a verdict, it is your bounden duty first to accurately define the term murder. Then, as murder is in legal practice divided into degrees, you must ascertain the character of these degrees. And after considering the evidence adduced, you must make each quality or degree of murder a touchstone which you can apply to the case of the prisoner as it now stands.

"And then, gentlemen of the jury, after you have made the application, and fail to find a correspondence, you can, as the killing is admitted, view its relation to what is termed justifiable homicide, which, if it is so considered by you, is warrant for an acquittal.

"In considering the case in hand you will understand that murder is, of necessity, an act of premeditation; the execution of a malicious design aforethought, and resulting in the death of the victim. The difference between

this, and justifiable homicide, lies between a thought dwelt upon and an unlooked for provocation of the instant with fatality imminent. Even when death ensues upon an attack with intent to kill, the act is not necessarily murder.

“ If a person is assaulted by another, and with a weapon, it is for him, not you, to decide as to the danger, and upon the probable outcome. Time is then short for deliberation, and the law of the colonies under which we live, as also the law of the land to which we own fealty, prescribes the right of reasonable resistance, and with any weapon at command, and it virtually allows the use of such weapon until the assailant is disarmed or disabled. But who shall decide when that point is reached and the victim of the assault is assured of personal safety? Who shall determine the conditions? Who among you will say that your judgment, and that alone, shall afford the criterion? Or shall say that the resistance should have ceased before the assailant was rendered helpless and possibly placed beyond revival, and that because it did not so cease the defendant is therefore guilty of murder?

“ Let us look into the nature of the evidence adduced, and see if we find evidence of premeditation.

“ You have heard it said that Wandee uses arrow heads of a peculiar kind, and that near the body were found such arrows; but the painstaking to establish this was superfluous, as the prisoner confesses that he took the life of the Washakim. He would have confessed as much at the outset of this trial, had he been called upon to plead, as

the Court would have been bound to call upon a white man to do.

“Had this prisoner been arraigned before a simple Justice Bench, the summary method of procedure a few moments ago intimated might have found a legal shadow of excuse, the prisoner being but an Indian; but, fortunately, his life or liberty are not now contingent upon one man's ability to sift evidence, but upon the combined judgment of twelve men, who, if too high in the scale of human social existence to be rated as his peers, are the more in duty bound to carefully weigh the evidence, if in reality any such evidence is to be found among the mass of verbiage offered as bearing against him, and to see that justice is duly meted out to the defenceless.

“Do unto him as ye would that he should do unto you, were he the strong and you the helpless one, never for a moment forgetting that since you have consented to sit in judgment, you have thereby, for the time, acknowledged him your peer.

“Now, as we have admitted the killing, and as no evidence other than that of the prisoner has been offered in regard to the circumstances attending it, it may be well for us to look behind the scene for a motive, for if it can be established that there was a motive, or a reason which might have instigated it other than self-defence, the fact will weigh heavily against the accused. Has any intimation appeared of ill feeling between the two chiefs prior to this event? Has any feud existed between the tribes; any animosity whatever, that has been shown or intimated

here? If not, where do we look for a motive? It certainly was not robbery, for no Indian hunter carries valuables upon his person. What occurred or existed prior to the event that could arouse premeditation of evil? You have heard nothing in all this mass of hearsay to indicate malice aforethought. Nothing in all this deluge of guess-work to lead you to think it might be the promptings of a spirit of revenge.

“You have heard the testimony of the prisoner. It is clear, concise, and perfectly easy to be understood. It needs no repetition, no elucidation. It is a plain statement of what he says are facts; and the only question for you to decide, in the framing of your verdict, is one of the prisoner’s veracity.

“It is out of the question for anything like corroborative evidence to exist, except you consider as such the wounds he bears upon his person, which we confess are of little weight, as after a battle, from any cause, the result might have been the same.

“But, gentlemen of the jury, holding fast to the confession as one point, and admitting that the hearsay evidence offered is true, and that the whole chain of guess-work is probable, nothing of it all can be construed to controvert the testimony of Wandee.

“Where, then, shall we look for a solution of the mystery? A theory respecting this affair suggests itself, and through your further forbearance I will present it. The parties were both Indians; and, like Indians, each secreted himself upon the discovery of game at rest and made his

shot from ambush. Both shafts left the bows at the same instant of time. Now if, as might reasonably have occurred, one missed his shot, while the other pierced the body of the game with a force that drove the arrow through and beyond, what is more natural than that a dispute should arise with regard to ownership, and that such dispute should lead to blows. If blows, then a battle, and to the victor belonged the spoil. If a battle, it could by no means of argument be construed into a murder, for even the laws that govern Christian nations hold him guiltless of murder who defeats his opponent in a duel, though to one party death ensues.

“You have heard the story of Wandee; you have seen his wounds; you realize the worthlessness of hearsay and surmises, and as you retire to frame your verdict you will not forget that if any doubt exists in your minds as to previously entertained malice, or premeditation of assault, you cannot convict him, as to him belongs the whole weight of your uncertainty. If he killed Shonto in self-defence, you cannot convict him. If he had the provocation of a blow, or if Shonto died in battle, you cannot convict the prisoner as you have no means of identifying the aggressor. And you will allow me to suggest to your minds upon retiring, that since his guilt or innocence has been left to the judgment of twelve men to decide, he is fully entitled to every consideration you would feel in duty bound to accord to a white man. I have done.”

A burden seemed to have been rolled from the shoulders of the now happy, smiling judge, and his dignified speech

and austere manner had entirely forsaken him as he rose to address the jury.

"The apparently learned counsel for the defense has fully charged the jury and thereby rendered it wholly unnecessary for me to read to you the elaborately prepared document upon which the Court has been engaged for the past week. The fact is, gentlemen of the jury, but little remains to be said, for the Court realizes that it has got itself into deep water, and that the safety of its reputation lies in the precipitate abandonment of the works, or in capitulation.

"Gentlemen of the jury, the exigencies of the case admit of no parley. The attacking party is in possession of the works and has spiked the guns. That happy thought of the counsel in the shape of a theory has utterly demolished and forever knocked out all our preconceived notions in respect to this case. If we had been counsel for the defendant he would have hung higher than Haman, through a misconception. But now I think the Indian is all right. The jury will now retire to the northeast corner of the court room and acquit the prisoner without delay, or as quickly as a decent respect for the forms in such cases provided will admit of.

"It is especially desirable that you arrive at a conclusion before this fire goes down, for I see there is no wood left on hand."

The jury retired, and three minutes had elapsed (already too much time for deliberation, as the prisoner was nothing but an Indian, and as the mercury, if there

had been any in the colony, would have indicated five below,) they reported ready to make a return.

Once more the now crest-fallen but still pleased judge, with a facial expression divided between chagrin at having so palpably erred, and satisfaction that real justice was after all to be administered, came to the front.

"Dress up men and come to salute. What say you, Mr. Foreman, is the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," was the quiet response.

And so ended the trial of the proud chief of the Quinsigamonds.

But a more terrible ordeal than that he had just passed was at hand, even at the doors, and for the first time since the trial commenced the Indian gave visible signs of trepidation. It was apparent he was weakening. The stoic was no longer equal to the emergency. The hardy honesty of the Packachoag, whose blood he confessed on the one side, and the stubborn heart of the fiery Quinsigamond on the other, cowered to the occasion, for there at the doors in waiting was nearly every young woman of the plantation. While not a few of the mothers were there to supplement the daughters' acts with a pious benediction.

The young women were there to lavish upon the handsome and now free Nipnet, hearts full of congratulation, with tongues sweeter to him than the whistle of the red-breast on an April morning. To look lovingly into the sublime depths of his calm black eyes. To even kiss good night upon his soft, tapering, brown fingers, for he

had been to them the beau-ideal of a perfect heathen, and when he came to grief, and their instinctive perceptions outran the measured tread of the law, and forestalled the jury's acquittal, they wept at the tardy ways and the purblind sight that rendered his fate so uncertain.

And he, the now more than ever admired young Indian, with an affectation of blushes,—for how could red show redness? lashed on his snowshoes and glided free as a hawk in his soarings, into the gloomy depths of the hemlocks.

CHAPTER VIII.

A COLONIAL SUPPER.

It was the evening of trial day.

It was four of the clock, noon past, by the thirty-hour sentinel that stood in the corner, and out of his old, black, mahogany dressing-gown frowned upon such as took no note of time, except as he hourly admonished them that "life is short and time is fleeting."

The sun that was just dropping behind the close-at-hand western hills, struggled through a portentous haze to make his existence appreciable, as he seemed for a moment to halt while he bade the little, sleepy world of Quinsigamond plantation good night; and but a few moments more elapsed when here and there a fugitive flake of snow seemed sent as a warning to the women who lived upon the distant hills to be wary of the venture home.

Captain Wing and Digory Sergeant, as also the Rices and Harts, decided that it was best that the matrons and spinsters should lodge at the Tavern, or at least should remain until the storm abated, as the snow was already so deep that even by daylight it was next to impossible for a horse to keep a trail at a gait faster than a walk, And as evening had now shut down upon the plantation. in the midst of the fulfillment of the meteorological

promise of the day, the enormous fire-places blazed and crackled as the giddy flames waltzed and pirouetted in their ample chambers, or chased each other chimneyward, shedding a benign blessing of light and caloric, each over twenty feet square of room.

Susan was sitting in a far corner of the parlor, her heart fluctuating between hope and fear. Hope that after all, the surmises of Eugene Archer might yet prove unwarranted, and that the conduct she so reasonably deplored in the captain might be favorably explained; fear that the truth might be even more startling than the first intimation was painful.

But here comes John, and she must at all events appear at ease lest her disconcertion should lead to the detection and betrayal of her secret and forever close the door to further discovery.

"Tell me, John, how is it you can always speak considerately of the deacon? He seems to me to be an old bear. I would not trust my own life in his hands against a valued stipend. A man who can speak so flippantly of murdering by process of law, as if an Indian was devoid of soul or sense, who can throw his avarice into the scale where a life is being weighed, can have no esteem of mine."

"Susan, the deacon is really a much better man than you give him credit for being. He has until now, with some show of reason, as he knew nothing of the facts, regarded Wandee as a murderer, and as such deserving of death. But after hearing Wandee's statement, and

seeing applied to it tests, and unthought-of explanations, he has changed his mind and would now be the last man in the plantation to do him an injustice.

“ His bluff introduction and procedure in the case, was the result of a settled, though too hasty conviction, that he was dealing with a blood-smirched desperado, and what appeared to you as his heartless manner in retiring the jury was the very reverse. It was abounding good nature, for he had seen his error and looked upon an acquittal as a foregone conclusion. And again, to partially account for appearances which you condemn, you will not forget that by both law and custom, the case of an Indian requires less formality than must by the same code of laws, govern a case where a white man stands accused. His allusions to the intervaes, though not excusable, are no doubt the effect of the frequent recurrence to his mind of a long-cherished desire to possess them for the general good, and unfortunately it vents itself in expression at inopportune moments. I have never had reason to suspect that the deacon would willingly be party to robbing any man, white or red; on the contrary, in every thoughtful discussion of the matter he has invariably favored ample compensation, and the equivalent he has offered is in excess, correspondingly, to anything heretofore paid to, or even asked by them. The deacon is, no doubt, tinctured with the current fallacy that an Indian has no rights a white man is bound to respect, but in practice, his native honesty usually asserts itself.”

"And are there many in the colony base enough, wicked enough, to act upon the principle you name?"

"Indeed there are, and it is the many who are at fault, more than the individual who puts the evil into practice. It is the school that teaches the sentiment, and which honest but indifferent and inconsiderate men float upon, and designing men avail themselves of, which carries the sin, and should pay its forfeit."

"Upon which side do you range, John? Do you seriously regard the sentiment an error?"

"I thought I defined my position when I called it a sin. I differ from nine-tenths of this community upon the subject. To me it seems absolutely wrong. But that opinion is no virtue in me. It is simply a matter, or rather the effect of reasoning based upon wise suggestions. You might say I was educated up to it.

"In my school days in Boston I had companionship of men who think beyond the little wall that hems in a city or a township. Men to whom and for whom there are two distinct worlds, and each ever present. The world of mind and the world of material things we have about us. I fell into a course of contemplation, piloted by my elders and betters, which led to opinions respecting rights of races, and other and perhaps more serious things widely at variance with those you observe as commonly accepted here.

"In such society man takes his problems, and by the methods taught him solves them, works out his own conclusions, by analyzing, assorting and massing data, and

individually takes the responsibility. We have here among us a few such. Men of limited education who have acquired habits of searching for the bottom of things, and working up instead of philosophizing upon surface indications only. But I regard them as accidental entities, who would be out of place, and out of season, could the right be ever out of season."

During this long dissertation, the chief intent of which seemed to be to exonerate the deacon, Susan had seemed to listen. But indeed her mind was for the most part absent. She was speculating upon the probabilities of herself becoming number two to masculine selfishness and duplicity. But as the captain finished his remarks, the supper bell in the hands of Black Jake sounded for the second time an impatient call.

"Come John, we must not keep them waiting longer, or Aunt Betsey will blame me for detaining you."

For the moment let us glance at the supper table, remembering that it is the details of existence that make life seem real, and that the truest introduction to society, or to individuals of a particular time, is to acquaint one with the particular manners and social adjuncts of the time.

Do not forget that this is not only a public house, this Castle Tavern, but that the host has private company to-night. The guests at this tavern must not expect to be served in courses, nor to see the host, after he has done the carving, exchange plates with every individual at the

table. "It is best to help yourselves," was the old-time dictum. You'll have no servants at your elbow here, presenting you with an elaborate "menu" upon torchon board, illuminated in colors upon one side, and delicate typography upon the other, and encased in ornate covers of cloth and gold. Here they are all equals, if you except the slave Black Jake, and his family, and make no account of a half dozen Indians who have, one at a time, dropped in to look and lounge. And you need not listen in the after sitting for that pop! and the burst of white foam to follow, and that supplemented by a gurgle that shall fill the atmosphere with the aroma of Heidsieck or Schreider. It may come—but don't wait for it if you are tired. Rum and royal loaf sugar, with perhaps a mug of flip, and for the elect a possible swallow of French brandy, is all the stimulant you are likely to get.

Some of the community had even objected to the use of these, as the meek little Quakeress, Mrs. Danson, who had taken Jim Pyke mildly to task for getting drunk four times in one week.

"Jeems," said Mrs. Danson, "thee does very wrong to take into thy stomach that which quarrels with and overpowers thy common sense."

To which the not now bewildered James made prudent answer.

"Mardam Danson, you must confess that all sorts o' folks use stimerlants stronger nor water; it's narteral mardam."

"I 'm not so sure they do, Jeems; I have my misgivings about it."

"Well now, mardam, we won't beat 'round the bush. S'pose ye begin ter home. Don't you drink tea jest about as often as ye think ye ken afford it?"

"Well, yes, Jeems. I can't deny it, I must be honest with thee. I suppose I do. But the cases are not parallel, Jeems. Alcohol is intoxicating and tea is not, as I am aware."

"Jest you hold right there mardam, and I'll make a p'int. That 'ar tea 's a stimerlant, ain't it?"

"Go on, Jeems; I can't do thine arguing for thee."

"Well, it 's er stimerlant an' so 's alkehall. Alkehall mebbe 's a leetle the strongest. It 's accordin' ter how much yer take. You perfer tea ter somethin' a leetle stronger, an' I 'm not er goin' t' object. That 'll dew very well for the women folks, kase they sorter keep in doors. Here, mardam 's the p'int, if you may perfer what stimerlant' you please ter, why may n't I enjoy the same perverlige? unless what 's sarce fer the goose ain't sarce fer the garnder. In which case you 'd orter be made ter drink rum."

"There 's no use arguing with thee, Jeems. Thee stands too much upon the letter."

"Oh, ho! Please 'scuse me marm; I thought it was mostly the sperit you 're complainin' on. I guess it 's no sort o' use your tryin' ter argy, s' long 's I've got the whip row, as I seem ter have in this yer case."

The guests and family at this our supper sitting numbered twenty, including the parson, who was a boarder.

All being seated, one universal ceremony must be observed. Divine grace must be implored. Even at a public tavern a blessing must be sought and thanks rendered. Nor did it matter that several of the party were not members of the Church, or even that at least two of them were guilty of the sin of skepticism, for custom ruled that such observances must be regarded, and not even John cared to provoke criticism by non-conformity. It is the rule, even outside of the circle of the elect, and although you are among the prospectively damned, you will bow at least an affectation of devotion or leave the room.

The invocation begins, without exception,—“Merciful Father!”—The body of it will be as variable as personal command of English and native volubility can render it, but the sentence preceding the final glorification is invariably—“Bless to good use what’s now provided for us.”

Having reverently united, or respectfully deferred, we lift our eyes and behold! venison,—venison roast and venison steak; partridges,—partridges are as plenty as black-birds; bear meat, and a joint of moose. The captain says the moose was shot in the Podunk woods, and the bear was killed down by the Assabet River, seven miles this side of Marlborough. Quails are here: quails split down the back, broiled and laid upon brown bread toast. And woodcock? Not a woodcock. There’s not a man in the

plantation can shoot one. The bird would be out of reach between the pan flash under the flint and the ignition of the powder within. But there is a fine, fat woodchuck, and a young coon, both taken from the hollow of a log and none the less fat for hibernating. Wild turkey is here: stuffed, and done to that beautiful tawny which the cook calls "brown." Done in that tin kitchen there before the fire, where Black Jake sat for an hour turning the spit to give the sissing fowl its final bath of caloric, while he in his turn, although his skin could never take brown, was almost as thoroughly stewed.

You have seen the corn-cakes: rich, yellow, and sweet—the "johnny-cakes"—and then there is that worst of all food;—the worst that was ever eaten; the same our good mothers in the country were stuffing us with, here in Yankee land, just half a century back,—that soft, soggy,* heavy, rye bread. If I had known it was coming, I would have been born a couple of decades later on. No wheat bread was there at that table—the one I write off—not a kernel of wheat had been grown in the country, and not a potato. A Massachusetts man had not then seen a potato, but there were turnips instead, for such as like turnips. And the pasty mince pies,—the art of making them is lost now. Stratified crusts with three hundred flakes to the layer, a professor of geology might classify them. And there were "punkin" pies, the cook books tell of them, as they are, but not as they were. Their period of primality stretches back to the times Azoic when all good things of the planet were semi-liquescient. No apples were nearer

than Marlborough. No fruit was there of any kind but native dried "huckleberries;" but our grandams were so skilled in the lore of the kitchen that the dried berry plumped to its full 'neath the spell of their magical cuisine. Coffee there was none; it had n't been naturalized; was yet alien to the tables of the colonists. Tea there was. Very fine tea; but it cost "two and ten pence" a tea-spoonful, and sugar was worth "four pence ha' penny" an ounce, and was "scurce" at that. Both these articles were excessively dear for most of these "nine-penny" planters, so the poor went without them.

Our guests had been busy, for the landlord carved zealously, and the mother and sisters were busy "a passin' things."

Every one now seemed thankful, as the Parson intimated they should be, when he cleared the way for attack by his invocation, or, as Jim Pyke said, "bragged over his victuals," and now came the liquid blessings. First to come was cider imported from Marlborough, twenty miles away. But the cider was getting hard and the ladies preferred "a little rum and much water, with a trifle of loaf sugar." The maple sugar business had not yet materialized. The Indians held the maple country.

The china had been set away. Thirty pounds sterling for a china set (and it took three sets for the party), was an item worth keeping in view (of the housekeeper).

Hot rum in little mugs, hot flip in quart mugs, with half a dozen champagne we did not expect. The table

never saw the like before, nor would it now, only that the Sergents are guests to-night.

With grace dolefully said; cheerful, thankful language uttered in mournful tones, dolorous anticipations of sitting by a great, white throne in night clothes, as an integral part of a white-gowned choir half a-wing with the joy of fruition; woeful intimations of sorrows impending in climatic horrors of intensest torridity, ended that supper of the tenth of November seventeen hundred and one.

Well for this party if they enjoyed the feast, for before it can be repeated at the Castle Tavern, all will be black with smoke, and fire, and blood, and ashes.

CHAPTER IX.

STILL PLOTTING.

THE whole, cold, dreary winter had now passed away, and April had come.

The blue-jay and the little, speckled woodpecker no longer reigned supreme in the chestnut forests, as when the bleak winds of winter whistled among the leafless branches, and the occasional crow that had skipped back and forth from Long Island to Massachusetts, or left on some sunny day the windless seclusion of a cedar-tangled basin among the hills, where robins and bluebirds roost with the hibernates,¹ now reconnoitered among the pine tree tops for some sheltered fort in which to weave her nest and deposit her eggs, while the robin and bluebird ventured forth from their winter quarters among the hackmatacks and interlacing vines of grape and woodbine to chatter bird love, or to repeat out of time, and out of sequence, half remembered snatches of a summer carol in the sunny clearings, or among the budding branches of scraggy oaks and wide-spread elms by river margin and by hem of lake. The brown thrasher had returned

¹ There is no greater common error than the supposition that robins and bluebirds of this climate migrate, or move southward to any great distance in winter. They retreat to densely wooded dells and winter there.

from southerly wanderings, the pigeons, in flocks that seemed like black bands stretched across the sky, wide acres in breadth, and based at either end upon the blue horizon, were escorting the solstice of summer, and the wild geese and great diver sportively bowed to the skulking, red savage, and honked defiance to his stone headed arrows.

Eugene Archer was still at the plantation, a guest of John Wing, and the recipient of every favor and politeness that ample means, warm friendship, and a generous hospitality could bestow.

But the lurking devil in his bosom could not be appeased. Where he was at first intent only upon winning and betraying the unsuspecting woman of Sagatabscot, his thoughts began now to assume more serious phases in the pursuit of his nefarious ends. He was already in humor to harbor suggestions and to take counsel of a determination so unyielding and relentless, that it pointed to success even through the spilling of blood.

Many times he had been to the house of Sergeant, and as often plied his arts, but yet to no purpose further than to keep her mind in a feverish excitement, the effect of jealousy upon one hand, and of his relentless importunities upon the other. Importunities which, while they did not amount to assault, or even unmistakable insult, were trying in the last degree to a woman whose whole nature was absorbed in the contemplation if not the actual worship of one idol; but so adroitly had he played upon her temper, stirring her to jealousy, pushing her

to indignation and resentment, and urging her on to despair; softening her to tears by his full-mouthed, simulated pity; leading her upward to hope only to crush her again with some damning innuendo, while all the while, just out of sight, yet half disclosed; insinuated but not spoken; the demon of a secret, that she dared do no less than to harken to his counsels, keep his company, and smother her dislike of him. She must of necessity endure him, and as she did so she made closer approach to her would-be seducer, fearing, and fluttering to escape the deadly spell, turning to this way and turning to that, but with eye ever fixed, she came nearer and nearer, and not less for the loathing, under the baleful influence of the charmer, almost within reach of his incorrigible passion.

Again and again, in a paroxysm of despair, lost to herself, lost to consciousness of all about her, reeling from the intoxication of woe, he had caught her falling figure in his arms and loaded her now bloodless lips,—half smothered the unconscious beauty with kisses reeking with a poison more deadly than the fabled upas, more fatal than the bite of cobra.

But he dared go no further. Bold as he was, fierce, unscrupulous, famishing with lust, he dared not ravage the field of his conquest; dared not avail himself of the advantage he had won. The dreaded bullet of old Digory hung over him like the sword of Damocles, like the phantom dagger of Macbeth. The ghost of Sergeant glided through the imagination of Eugene, and between the daughter and the passion of the ravisher with a something

like "Meet me to-morrow at Philippi!" And she escaped; was yet unpolluted.

Over and over he had presumed upon the power of the first great, hinted-at but unspoken secret, aided and abetted by the many lesser secrets of clandestine meetings, where she had been beguiled by hope of hearing the greater one—the one concerning an heiress in Boston to whom John had seemed to pay court, at least to the extent of frequently escorting her to parties and to plays, till the tongue of the town was rife with tales and side-spoken surmises amounting almost to a scandal—divulged, to propose to her to accompany him, or to meet him as if by chance in that city, where she might hear all, learn all, and safely cover the true purpose of her absence by a pretended visit to the boarding school she had but a twelve-month since retired from.

That excuse, or some one of her own devising might do, for was ever a woman without the wit to veil a serious intent, or to thwart suspicion by a specious subterfuge? To such proposals she invariably gave a stern, unqualified refusal and rebuke. From the part of a spy upon her idol she instinctively recoiled, but she saw no farther into the real purpose. To leave her father's house under false guise was base, dishonest, and unbecoming to a woman, in her own view, and she readily acceded to the instinctive prompting of a guileless nature. Her sense of honor overshadowed the tempter and his designs, and, so far from advancing his interests, half exposed his scheming and half betrayed his villainy.

Balked and vexed beyond endurance, indignant at the frequent miscarriage of his designs, he began to plot for the destruction of the man who stood so much in his way, and not only for his, but for that of Wandee the friend of his rival; the one who seemed to read men by intuition; who required no teaching to bring him into the possession of knowledge; who seemed in league with omniscient but invisible entities, and whose skill at divination was sure to unravel whatever mystery might hang about the taking off of the captain. The chief of the Hill Indians,—he must go first, as being the quickest to suspect, the shrewdest to fathom, and the most desperate to avenge. Wandee must die, but must not die at the hand of Eugene. There was another that would be but too glad to compass his death, if circumstances could be shaped to afford opportunity. In the ordinary course of events opportunities would offer, and it remained only for Tehuanto to be advised in time; and as for the captain's death,—time, watchfulness, and seasonable preparation would undo any case of unsuspecting assurance. To the Washakim chief,—the feared, and hated because feared, Wandee's scalp would be worth a score of ordinary Indians' lives. Tehuanto the Washakim, wanted one scalp now, and, in the development of a grander feud in process of unfoldment, another would be wanted soon.

Eugene had more than once consulted Tehuanto at Washakim and was perhaps the only white man who could, at this time, unguardedly pass the secretly hostile Washakim lines.

He saw him again and learned that the hatchet had been secretly lifted from the earth in favor of the great Wampanoag, as had to him been previously intimated.

Upon condition that by arrangement, or by opportune appraisal, the two chiefs—the white and red—should be placed within the possibility of capture, the man Archer was assured of safe passport at any and all times among the disaffected Indians, and that he should, at reasonable call, be furnished aid to secure the prize he so much coveted,—the woman of Sagatabscot.

The almost daily rides of Eugene became longer than was their previous wont, and at the same time he more than ever courted the friendship of Captain Wing, and made him the supposed confidant of gleanings from the strolling Indians whom he met in his peregrinations.

His finely bred mare frequently entered the stable late at night, reeking with sweat and panting from long continued heavy work. Her step at Digory's clearing was heard at longer intervals of time, and Eugene's manner gradually changed from the ardent but unrequited lover to the outer verge of studied politeness and to a more general attention to the other members of the family.

Captain John's semi-weekly visits to Sergeant's clearing were continued as usual, and no one could have guessed from the manner or language of Susan the cause of that pallor that was gradually stealing over her sweet face, of the increasing fullness and brilliancy of those large blue eyes,—of the frequent compression of those lips from

which the slowly receding blood was filching the halo of carmine.

She kept her secrets, for they now numbered many; kept them, although they lay upon her tender soul like sins; sins feared, sins dreaded, sins repented of and cancelled by days of mental anguish and by nights of voiceless wailings. Kept them against the violent throes of a conscience that struggled for confession. Kept them because she dared not do otherwise, for who could understand or appreciate the motive, however she declared it, of those clandestine meetings with Eugene?

And Eugene had fostered the condition; had bidden her look within, upon her own soul, and discover if possible, the shadow of a fault for which she might be found accountable, other than what she knew to be their harmless meetings.

He coyly commended the impregnable fortress of her chastity, and ardently extolled the constancy with which she regarded the beau-ideal of her faultless fancy. Indeed he frankly confessed to something like abuse, in so persistently making her the subject of his desire to sound the depth of womanly faith, at the same time tendering her pity for her misfortune in fixing her choice upon a faithless object. No harm could possibly ensue from what had so far occurred if only secrecy were maintained, but should the community become aware of the fact it will not readily condone the seeming offence against what it is pleased to regard as proper deportment. Let it once come to the common ear, and the tongue of scandal will run riot and

gloat in nothing so much as in consigning a fair fame to the blackness of perdition. The men might pardon the shortcoming, might even excuse a failing or deny a fault, but where in all the human sisterhood was known a heart that would deign to forgive or even palliate? And now, having bewildered the woman with logically considered consequences, roused her fears, softened her by penitent confessions, soothed her by expressions of pity, and charged her with a self-protecting secret, he, with fiendish simulation of pious probity, begged her to consider whether it were possible for him, against whom no man's tongue had ever caviled, to so far forget his duty to a friend and comrade, his faith in scriptural teachings, his conscience and his God, as to deliberately aim to compass her ruin and moral death by robbing her of a jewel so priceless as a woman's chastity.

And the woman's heart was at last won, not to his love, not to his unhallowed embraces, but to the duty of shielding the character of one who solemnly declared he was without sin, save the momentary toleration of a passion which her own sweet face had stirred to frenzy.

Susan contemplated: she could die, die with her secrets; but she could not, would not smirch a fame that vouched for and covered her purity. Nor would she, in deference to a sentimental prompting, soil the name of one who harbored no thought of evil, and whose rashness was the result of what he had blindly fancied were her own fascinations, or, was it indeed blindness? Was it not

possibly true that some, to self unknown, charms of hers had ravished his probity?

But she modestly shrunk from entertaining such vanity. She was to blame. She would shut her lips and endure. She pitied him, and pity between equals is akin to love. It is the green room to the stage of passion. She almost loved him. She looked forgiveness; she looked kindly, trustfully, and what would he more? She made no sound with her lips, but her eyes gave token so truly of her thought, that Eugene understood her, but he was too wise to make a second mistake. He knew it to be the white flag of truce. There was no further fear of exposure. She was as securely caged and manacled as a prisoner within walls of stone. He had probed her spirit, fathomed every passion, and could read her thought in facial expression. It no longer needed a tongue to assure him that her virtue was bottomless, and that her sense of duty reached from earth to heaven. Neither need she speak to say that he was already half forgiven. That fact would give him rest and opportunity to change his methods.

His purposes were the same and irrevocably fixed, but their accomplishment must come through other means than he had hitherto resorted to.

CHAPTER X.

THE AMBUSCADE.

APRIL was now on the wane, and the budding chest-nuts heralded an early summer.

The winter now passed had been a terror, even for New England. As each succeeding month went by the frost-king had renewed his strength, and the winds piped louder, oftener, and in more threatening tongues.

A night of dismal howlings under eaves and over gables was succeeded by a morning where the hoar frost in the atmosphere lent to the nearer view the leaden, semi-opacity of distance, while drift after drift of snow piled each upon the one preceding, with never a ray of sunshine unobstructed by the whirling, dancing snow, or a fog warm enough to appreciably settle either or any fall.

Neighbors had burrowed from house to house, and men tunnelled to their barns to reach the lowing cattle chafing in trepidation at the endless twilight.

No Indian summer in November, no January thaw, no mildness in the months following; but occasionally a frozen sleet would crust the last snow fall and make it possible to move about on foot without snow-shoes, but as a rule a woman could not stir out of doors, and no man could, to any purpose, unless he rode his rackets well.

And yet, with the frozen rain came a partially compensating feature, at least to such as could appreciate the beautiful, when at early sunrise the limbs of leafless, ice-encumbered trees sparkled in a dazzling, prismatic blaze of beauty, as if every mine of gems from the Orient to the Occident had been rifled of its glittering carbon jewels to decorate a New England forest. As if the fractured bosoms of the hills had yielded up their wealth of stalactites, and every sea and ocean bed from India to the Golden Gate had loaned their pearls to beautify a landscape where pines and hemlocks bowed and swayed beneath their crackling weight of splendors.

But yet there was comfort in the plantation, for fuel was abundant. Every master of a house had his sheltered cords of wood, all cut and split, and of back-logs and fore-sticks pile on pile.

And game was plenty, and easily obtained; for what was to the deer and moose an almost insurmountable barrier—or at least terribly fatiguing, for at such times the deer could only move about by leaps that cleared the upper crust of snow—was nothing to man, whose inventive talent enabled him to walk without sinking on a bed of down and to move about with as much rapidity as if a greensward only was beneath his feet.

The partridge, to escape inclement weather, would burrow in the light and falling snow, leaving traces that a hunter's eye at once detected. Quails gathered in covies, huddled in little pyramids, with heads all pointing to a common centre, waiting until the falling snow had

builded a mound above them, as if to say—"Here lies." Immense logs, trunks of great chestnuts, windfalls of a century past; hollow trunks five feet in diameter, told by the lately torn inside char, not less than by the snow at the open end wasted by animal heat, where bruin made his winter quarters. Orifices, denoting cavities, high up in the old oaks and walnuts gave token of insect laboratories teeming with the nectar of daisy, golden-rod and arbutus; and the wild turkey, sorely discomfited,—since acorns, chestnuts, checkerberries, and even hazel-nuts were entombed in the all-pervading frost, pecked industriously at the hanging pine cones, oblivious of the wily hunter and his noiseless step.

But the first of April brought warm rains, and the snows melted and left patches of leafy carpet in the woods.

And the rains and the fogs and the sunshine, and, more than all, the high, hard, but tempered south winds, tempered by the sunshine of Virginia, tempered by the leafing forests of Long Island, rent and tore the crystal coverlet of the lake and drifted, ground up, and dissolved the ice.

And here, upon the lake, on a soft April evening, by starlight, but more by the light of a huge pitch pine torch borne by an Indian standing in the bow of a canoe, a white man and an Indian, the white man sitting flat upon the bottom of the birch, with a three-tined spear in his hand, were paddling cautiously along and near the shore, looking for, and every moment lifting into the canoe, pickerel, trout and perch.

They had left Wigwam Hill and were paddling past the round hill on the plantation side to the west of the island by the upper narrows,¹ when a whistling sound close by their ears followed by another and still another, a thud in the water close at hand, a splash and a skip beyond, and a sharp vibrating sound, such as a stiff strung sinew gives out when freed from tension, caused the Indian to drop his torch into the lake, and himself into a sitting position in the canoe.

Four stout arms now sent the vessel flying through the water and out of bow-shot range.

"How is that, Wandee? Whose scalp was it meant for?" inquired Captain John.

"Me do' know—shoot good—cut leetle bit ear—some bleed—scalp all good."

"Duck, Wandee!" exclaimed the captain, and both men went flat into the bottom of the boat and heard another thud, and another ominous whizzing sound. But the arrow fell short. They were out of range.

"Long shoot—no Injun. Injun know better. Trow 'way arer."

"Who but an Indian shoots an arrow, Wandee?"

"Do' know—big fool—Injun shoot, Injun big fool—maybe Washakim."

Both were now sitting upright, satisfied of their safety.

"See them skip through the hemlocks!" called out the captain, who was already sweeping the shore line with his levelled rifle.

¹ Upper narrows— the stone bridge.

"Crack!" went the piece, and an Indian fell and rolled down into the lake.

A second discharge, that from Wandee's rifle, and another fell, but rallied again and went on, supporting himself partly by the low branches, and partly by the scattering spoonwoods, while two of his companions necessarily exposed themselves in their efforts to save the wounded Indian's scalp, either by aiding him in flight, or by secreting him in some near-at-hand thicket, for the scalp of an Indian is of more value than his life. He could yield up the latter gracefully, as grace in the struggles and contortions of personal conflict goes, but to yield up to an enemy a trophy of that enemy's valor is too humiliating for an Indian.

"Good shoot!" muttered Wandee, as he dropped the reloaded barrel of the old flint-lock to a level.

Another opportunity, too good to be lost.

"Bang!" went the old smooth-bore, and as the reflection of sound zig-zagged down the lake from shore to shore and died away upon the ear, the sharp yell of an Indian, a yell half of pain, half of defiance, was followed by fifty answering voices, for the Hill Indians had been aroused by the first report of fire-arms, and approximating in thought to its import had covered the intervening space and were now darting through the chestnut woods and up the round hill like ground shadows when wind-driven scuds flit across the pathway of the sun.

"Good shoot! Good shoot! Go for scalp!" and the young chief held the rusty, old Queen's arm up to the

moonlight, affectionately patting stock and lock, while mouthing his verbal caresses in a spasm of delight and admiration.

The captain and Wandee were but a moment in reaching the shore. There was no fear of ambush now. That yell of the pursuing Quinsigamonds in an almost continuous shriek, had warned the Washakims to retreat toward the Twin Lakes as rapidly as feet could carry them.

Search for the trail was already begun. But a moment had elapsed after landing from the canoe when a guttural sound from Wandee, uttered scarcely above a murmur, assured the party that he had struck a trail and was following up by slow and cautious steps such indications as the moonlight disclosed, for every tree by its shadow obscured it and necessitated more careful scrutiny. Down from the hill and across the old corn land, land not as now covered with water, land where the City Farm's Brook enters the lake. Here the trail was very distinct.

This short cut through the opening would have been avoided had not the pursuit been too hot. As the trail was now clearly visible to the eye of Wandee he broke into a shap run. Did the reader ever see a wild Indian run? It is no such hurry-scurry, break-neck, one hundred yard gait as the latter-day white sprinters affect, where the runner must be sponged and rubbed and fanned to restore the lungs to their normal habit of contraction and expansion with healthful regularity, but a swinging lope of ten miles to the hour; one that could be kept up from a meridian to a setting sun. A low bent figure,

slouchy, creeping, stealthy and snake-like in movement, flitting past you as does the startled mother cat-bird,— here, there, and gone. And Wandee's gait was one that soon put distance between him and the fleetest hunter of the tribe, for he was an Indian athlete and had no peer in the Nipnet nation.

The sun rose beautifully over Shrewsbury hills, and fixing his crimson eye upon the flat under Old Wigwam Hill vainly sought for the gallant young chief of the Quinsigamonds, and in default of finding him screened it in a cloud-tear, the portent of a day of weeping. A well-timed obsequy,—for Wandee is in bonds. The tough, green walnut withes are cutting their way into his wrists and ankles and the stake is set to burn him to a crisp.

The old witch squaw is here at the Hill and is tramping up and down among the wigwams wringing her hands, muttering imprecations and fuming like a wild beast, a goaded lunatic, or a woman in a spasm of anger. Her inner eye has caught on to conditions that never a soul here has dreamed of. The scouts had all returned by sunrise, and the white man had returned to the Castle two hours in advance of it. No particular alarm was felt except it was that something which had so wrought upon the old squaw—and she as usual took no partners into her seance—until, with the sun two hours high it commenced raining; a cold, drizzling northeaster.

The chief should have certainly been at home by sunrise, or at least should have known, when it rose and went

into a cloud that rain would soon follow; should have known by the mottled sky of the evening previous and by the distinct lunar circle inclosing a single star that the day would be stormy, and that a little rainfall would utterly obliterate every remnant of a trail.

Indeed, he had already taken time enough to go to Washakim and return.

In the afternoon Captain Wing appeared upon the scene, having come on horseback by the Millstone Hill path and wigwam trail.

The warriors were assembled, and were beginning to regard the absence of Wandee with a feverish excitement, not so manifest in their general manner, as in the eye, often fixed as in absent thought, and an illy concealed nervousness of movement or twitching of muscle.

The captain made but a brief stay, and started for home puzzled and sad. And now, as the sun neared the western horizon where he makes an early sitting behind the summit of Millstone Hill, suspicion began to be manifested that the white men were in some way concerned in the mysterious absence of their chief.

No one would for a moment harbor a suspicion that the captain was privy to it, but much had been said from time to time by the praying Indians, of overhearing expressed desire to obtain possession of the Washakim corn lands on the Quinnapoxit, and what if a compact had been made whereby the chief's murder, or perhaps delivery to the Washakims, should be made the equivalent for broad acres?

The Twin Lake tribe would sacrifice much to avenge themselves of Shonto's death. Tehuanto had said so; said so in the presence of the praying Indians, the Packachoags. To court their favor and acquire their lands might not the white men have waylaid him and effected with the bullet what few would have the hardihood to attempt in a more equal contest,—what no half-dozen Washakims would risk with only arrows and tomahawks; what Tehuanto, himself a warrior of no slight renown, would shrink from in dismay?

The Indians of Wigwam Hill were fast verging towards a vicious mood. They said in their dialect, as fairly interpreted, "White men are not all Captain Johns. Some are deacons, and deacon wants land. Some are preachers, and preachers talk of baptism and blood, and of washing in blood as if it was a holy and commendable thing. And if the white men can wash themselves in the blood of one of their own brothers, and suffer no remorse, but rather glory in it, what may we,—who are too poor to own houses and have only colored beads for wampum, whose only weapons are a bow and tomahawk,—what may we expect at their hands if we stand in the way of their never satisfied greed? However well they may have treated us since they drenched our fathers with fire-water and robbed them, they are at best bad men, and if they do us no harm now, it is because they have nothing to gain of us."

Peace, Indians; you shall see your chief again or shall see him terribly avenged.

CHAPTER XII.

KING PHILIP AT THE COUNCIL FIRE.

THE prospects of the little plantation began now to wear a gloomy aspect, and the thoughtful ones were full of dark forebodings. The Washakim Mission had been broken up, and the converted Packachoags dismissed with a message in the form of a protest against the clearing of more land on the Quinnapoxit by white men, and also complaints that the whites had commenced breaking land on the lower intervalles, lands reserved by the Indians expressly for corn planting.

The land had been tilled by them, after their rude fashion, from as far back as tradition extended. It was their hope, their reliance, their birthright.

It had at times, when game was scarce, saved their tribe from starvation, and they were in no mood to relinquish possession for a song, as had the Quinsigamonds when they sold the hillsides and valley of the Bimeleck. If the Quinsigamonds had been unwisely generous, or, what was more likely, stupid under the influence of that efficient co-worker with the white man when civilization arrays itself against barbarism, struggling for mastery without resort to force, they had at least bequeathed an example to the neighboring tribes of

the folly of relying upon strangers to dictate both sides of a bargain.

Hardly had the planters recovered from their surprise at the temerity of the Washakims in daring to dismiss the Mission and to boldly assert their rights, before delegates from the Quaboags, the Quinnapoxits, the Wachusetts and the near-at-hand Asnebumskits came in with similar complaints, and intimations of trouble if the aggressions were persisted in, and, what was stranger than all else, and from its very strangeness the quickest to awaken the ready apprehension of the white men to a sense of danger, was the absolute refusal of every member of each delegation to taste of spirits.

Never before had a wayworn Indian declined this proffered politeness, and it was well known that any Indian would go cold, go hungry, go without sleep, to obtain it. They must be acting under authority more feared, more respected, than the white man supposed to exist.

How came about this unison of purpose and determination? This acting as of one accord by parties blown together from the four winds? It was indeed a staggering mystery and argued complicity among the tribes or obedience to some dominant will, and in either case conspiracy, but to what purpose could be only a matter of conjecture.

Nearly the whole plantation were soon in a fever of excitement and alarm. There were exceptions among them. Digory Sargent, whom the neighbors said did not

fear the face of red clay; Captain John Wing, who seemed to lead a charmed life, and who had so far in fact ingratiated himself into the good will of the savages that in time of peace they seemed to accept him as a pet leader and oracle of the tribes, and who had ordinarily the most complete control over them without seeming to bear command; Gershom Rice, who had passed two years among the Indians utterly alone, and had commanded not only their respect but love, so far as an Indian is capable of entertaining or manifesting the sentiment; Parson Meekman, he who mingled the love of Jesus with the valor of the Crusader; Jim Pyke, and some others, who had in the course of events actually tasted heathen blood, were among the unterrified. And Eugene Archer was there, indifferent as usual. He neither feared nor cared for them, but simply despised the whole race of red-skins.

Some others, as the matter was talked over, seemed to have imbibed that contempt which comes of familiarity, but even such—excepting perhaps the pastor, who had, strictly speaking, no family ties, and whose bovine pluck knew no intermediate sphere between Christian duty and pugnacity—had wives and sons, daughters and sisters, and were disposed at least to regard their safety.

At a casual gathering of the white men at the Castle Tavern it was decided that the Justice—ordinarily Deacon Henschman—should call a meeting at once, to consider the safety of the plantation, and also such other

business as might, without special warrant, come before the meeting.

The date of the meeting was fixed for the Thursday following, and as Sergeant, Curtis, and both the Rices were there, it would be easy for them to notify all except such as lived in the immediate vicinity of the Castle.

Before the party broke up Captain Wing informed them that he had come in possession of certain knowledge that bad blood was manifest among the Wigwam Hill Indians. That they had distinctly avowed their belief that Wandee, whom the white men knew to be strangely absent, had been waylaid and murdered by them to gain favor of the Washakims, and to use that power in furtherance of their designs upon the corn lands of the Quinnapoxit.

"The Quinsigamonds," said the captain, "will be slow to dig up the hatchet, but unless something is done to disabuse their minds of this suspicion, or from some other source something definite comes to hand respecting the fate of Wandee, no man can fail to see the dangerous tendency of the tribe, which, although the smallest in point of numbers, can easily make themselves the most formidable, from the fact that they possess a score or so of muskets, and ammunition in abundance. You are well aware that they have regarded their young chief with the love of a brother, and almost the reverence due to Deity."

"Then, indeed," said the parson, who had been an attentive listener to the captain's remarks, "then, indeed,

I for one exult in his timely taking off, for is it not written: 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me?'"

The deacon had been sitting for several minutes, looking intently at the great iron crane in the now cold fireplace, and with his cane poking the S shaped pot hooks back and forth, apparently so absorbed in meditation that neither the warnings of the captain nor the gallant rejoinder of Parson Meekman had aroused him.

But now the face of the old time-piece looked down upon him from its high perch next the ceiling, and in a clear, sharp, bell-like note, called out to him—may be to all—"one—two—three—four," and gazing down upon its pendulum as it wagged industriously just above the floor, ticked out, "and more to come."

"Well, well!" called out the deacon, starting to his feet, "this won't do. It's nigh on to milking time and some of you have far to go. I guess the intervalles won't be ploughed up by us this year."

This was on Monday, and it was arranged that the meeting of the planters should occur at two of the clock P. M. on the day named.

And while the planters are asleep to-night let us stroll over the great hill¹ and down to Wigwam and the Lake, for far away, down the blue Nipnap, we hear the dip of many paddles.

The moon shines brightly; it is nearly full. That long

¹ Millstone Hill—"The great hill."

stretch of lake water gleams, flashes, glitters and dances in the moonbeams as the feeble breath of south wind stirs it into tiny ripples.

We, under the shadow of the great hemlocks near the summit of Wigwam Hill, stand half appalled as now and then a flying scud spins across the cold white disc, and its transient, unstable counterpart jumps over moonlit ground to lose itself in the dense shadows at our feet.

Wigwam Hill can never look so wild, so wierd again. And yet within the next two centuries no change shall come, save the felling of a few old trees, to be replaced again; and a green plat covered with snowy tents for vanished wigwams; and sporting shells in place of birch canoes; and the bearded white men for the wampumed bare-faced Indian.

The lake,—how altered, and how happy; noise enough, but it is all music; life enough, but it is all peaceful; enough to see, but it is all the beauty of nature embellished by art. The old chestnut forests and the dark pine headlands still linger, still struggle to maintain supremacy among the varied features of the landscape, bold, dark, untamed as when they owned the Nipnets for their master.

But look! as we now sail up the lake in this harnessed leviathan of the waters, with the pent up fire and smoke in its seething bowels, and emitting from its screaming, groaning, mouth and nostrils the exhaust of a volcanic motor, we see each nook and glen, each hill top, cove and promontory, show flecks of white among the green leaves of the forest. Quinsigamond's shores have been reepled,

twice inhabited within two centuries, and in the interim, desolate as the shoulders of Puebla.

Before, birch wigwams and the sun-browned figures of the half nude savage, whose highest art was to shape an arrow-head, or to carve a hieroglyphic on the white skin of his birch canoe. This time, the combined results of thirty centuries of an art-fostering and wisdom-gathering civilization have baptized it in immortality. He of two centuries ago draws his bow-string, and believes that were he strong enough, he might transfix the round moon with his arrow; while he, the white man, just on the crown of Wigwam Hill, just over the school encampment, over that new star of promise, levels his weapon at blue ether and leaping into fifty thousand years of space along a single line of light, seizes a planet by its pencilled beard and demands the story of its weight, its course, its composition and its destiny.

As we stand, this night of April seventeen hundred two, upon the summit of the hill and gaze at the black pine headlands, the bay lands and bluffs of chestnut, pale even by moonlight when contrasted with the points of pine; as we look along the dazzling brightness of the moonlit waters, passing in vision the narrows on the south, two miles away, passing the many wooded islands that break the waters into sparkling, light-emitting patches, and in imagination rounding our canoes into the great southern basin, we see a line of twenty birches coming toward us, tossing the light spray in white curling sheets,

moving steadily, swiftly, but in no apparent spirit of competition.

On come the canoes, now in full view, now out of sight behind some island, and now like some monster serpent wriggling in single file up the open lake, and now—let us step back into the deeper shade, for just below us, the canoes are making land and from the foremost steps—we have seen him before—we recognize him—King Philip of Mount Hope.

A fire is already burning on the plat below us in the midst of the circle of white birch wigwams, and as the canoes are carried to the land the circle of warriors is formed, and outside that the squaws and half-grown children gather to catch a glimpse of the great chieftain whose influence has spread from lodge to lodge and from tribe to tribe over the whole north country, as if his daring spirit permeated the omnipresent air, or rode upon the whispering, tell-tale winds, while in the centre of the group—mark for a thousand awe-struck, or admiring eyes—stands the commanding figure of the Wampanoag.

From the shadows of the black hemlocks where we stand gazing down the bald precipice and the steep earth inclination below it to the little plain, we see people from all the tribes that rally under the general name of Nipnets. Even half a score of Washakims are there, and although now the deadly enemies of the Quinsigamonds, they are for this night as safe as if in the forest of the Twin Lakes.¹

¹The two lakes of Washakim—twelve miles north of Quinsigamond.

With slight, preliminary remarks, recommending unity of purpose and action, urging the wisdom of abandoning individual, local, and tribal feuds and joining hands for the furtherance of the general weal, Philip launches out into the stormy sea of his great subject which is general war; a war against the whites as a race; a war where no quarter is to be asked and none granted. A war of utter extermination.

To Philip the dialect of the Nipnet nation was an alien tongue. But being born to leadership in the Narragansett country, and being early ambitious of a fame wider than was to be acquired by any act he could perform within its narrow limits, he had set himself while yet a boy to the acquisition of all the spoken tongues, from the St. Lawrence on the north to Long Island on the south, and from the Penobscot country to the Algonquins of the Mohawk Valley, not dreaming in what particular direction it might avail him.

To show the Nipnets the insincerity of the white man in his often repeated professions of love for his red brothers, he cited the occasion when the planters of Quinsigamond—

To faithfully interpret the Nipnet idiom—

“By promises never to be fulfilled, beyond the payment of the ‘twelve pounds sterling,’ paid chiefly in red cloth at twice its market value, and aided by all the arguments and persuasive eloquence of the five educated and baptized praying Packachoags,—men who had sold themselves to the white man for the promise of fire-water in this world

and glory in a world to come; who had been taken into the pay of those men solely with a view to induce them to persuade their brethren to relinquish the last vestige of a title to the soil; and who had been taught to read word pictures of a life to come, of bliss eternal and ineffable for such as would turn their backs upon the Great Spirit, the soul of things, and bow down and worship before their Jehovah and his Son, the man Jesus; and to picture never ending torments in a sea of burning pitch for such as should deny Him and refused to be baptized, or should put stop or hindrance upon the desires or interests of these self-styled men of God.

“By false promises and senseless warnings, by misrepresentation and deceit, and most of all by the effect of that fire-water which makes the warrior or patriot yielding as a squaw, and feeble as a pappoose, they have robbed you of your lands for considerations without value; they have driven the game from your forests with their noisy dogs and guns; have dragged your rivers with their nets until the few trout left are overfed and laugh at your feather flies and hooks of bone. They have pastured their cows where you have planted corn, have robbed the trees from which in winter you have dragged your honey, and in their greed to possess all have chopped them down and forever ruined your sources of supply. They have taken your warriors upon groundless charges, and have either murdered them by legal process or sold them into perpetual bondage to some far-off country beyond the sea. They have shot down your brothers in mere wantonness,

debauched your squaws until your polluted stock, as seen in rusty hairs, in sky-lit eyes, and jaws that in the years to come will bristle like the black bear of your forests, — should shame you out of tolerance. And they have taught your children to despise the hope and help of the Great Spirit, the shield and succor of your fathers. And did they not hang your friend and brother, the good Matoona of Packachoag,¹ without the shadow of a trial, and gave him only scorn when he offered to refute their allegation of murder by proving an alibi, and that through Indians that the white men themselves would trust?

“They have spread fire and ruin in every corner and lodge of the Nipnet nation and brought mourning into every wigwam, in revenge for thoughtless, unimportant acts by individual members of your tribes; and if a murder has been done by you, who shall deny that it was prompted by that mad spirit of their earthen jugs?

“They have been in the darkness of the night, while unsuspectingly you slept without a watch, and from this very spot where the Hill Indians, the Quinsigamonds, for generations past all counting, have lived in peace and quietness, and where their right to live, to hunt, to plant, to fish and to bury their dead has been respected and held sacred, even by the warring Mohawks, and the reckless, roving Penobscots, they have been here,—the just men, the good, the praying men of God, and, seen only by the stars,

¹Hung in Boston after a shadow of trial.

and by that Great Spirit who daily chastens you for sloth, for inactivity, for tame submission to unequal foes,—have been here, and by stratagem have murdered in stealth the glory of your present and your promise for the future. Have lured away and murdered the son of Sagamore John of Packachoag—Wandee, Chief of the Quinsigamonds.

“ And now these white men would charge this homicide upon your brothers of Washakim, as they charged the killing of Shonto upon Wandee.

“ Was ever Indian base enough for such duplicity? Was ever Indian wicked enough to do two murders that a thousand might ensue? To kill two chiefs and implicate two tribes in murders, that the two halves of a nation might fall upon each other like lynxes fighting to the death, while he, the white man, left alone, unscathed, might peaceably appropriate the corn lands on the Quinnapoxit? Warriors of Quinsigamond! before these strangers, chiefs of tribes throughout the Nipnet nation, do I conjure you in the name of all that is dear in the land of your fathers; by your love of the forests where you learned to hunt; of the lake where your dead sires taught you to paddle and to fish; by your love of home and children; by the memory of a thousand wrongs inflicted upon you by this alien, moon-faced, spawn of treachery, and by the memory of your dead chief Wandee, whose ghost, all unappeased roams earth-bound, hapless until you, side by side with the Washakims, shall avenge his death.

“ But look! Can you not see it! Or do I grow giddy with my conjurations? The picture I would draw for

you, in bloodless figure stares me in the face. Wandee! Wandee!! No, no. 'Tis not he. 'Tis but the imagination holds a momentary mastery. And yet, still here? Spirit, shadow, speak; I conjure thee! Say if thou wert slain in battle, or called down by a white man's bullet from an ambush? 'Tis Wandee. There against the black wall of the mountain—'t is he—or have these woes unstrung the brain of Philip?"

But it is visible, and upon that narrow ledge, half way up the sheer ascent of rocks, where Wigwam faces Shrewsbury hills, Wandee, in or out of the flesh, paces across, halts, looks down, and hurries on into the darkness within easy range of a thousand pairs of startled eyes.

The old squaw of the second sight, the Witch of Wigwam, has been performing antics just outside the circle of the fire-light. Her long black hair hangs loosely over breast and shoulders, and her dark, snaky eyes sparkle in the frenzy of some wild hallucination. Is this indeed a real form that she alone can make perceptible, tangible for the moment, as the lookers on? The spirits may have responded to the sorceress' call. To some witchery of her contriving. It may be—such things are said to happen—that the veritable ghost of Wandee draws from the sympathetic unity of a thousand minds, or from as many bodies, materiality enough to invest itself for a moment with the semblance of mortality. It may be—such things are the subject of a theory—that in all their minds the recollections of their chief are wrought up to such intensity that it needs but the suggestion of a visible counter-

part to paint upon these walls of stone a reflex of the ideal.

Wandee or his ghost appears to them. The Quinsigamonds espouse the cause of the red king, but the Hill Indians and the Washakims do not bury the hatchet although they quietly part company.

We observed that the Hill Indians were startled,—awed by the apparition.

To the Washakims present the ghost of Wandee had a far different but not less strange meaning. The one had seen a ghost, and one but a translation.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BIG SCARE COUNCIL.

THE morning of that Thursday, the day appointed by the white man for taking into consideration measures for safety, had come. The hour for the meeting had been fixed at two o'clock P. M., and at one o'clock nearly every man in the plantation was at the Castle. Captain Wing was absent, having received at the hand of a strolling Indian who had passed early in the morning, a note from an acquaintance in Marlborough, requesting a personal interview on the trail at Shrewsbury Hill, at eleven o'clock that morning, when the writer would make a communication of importance respecting the time of the proposed flight from the plantation, if such flight should at the meeting of the planters be determined upon.

The captain had said to Black Jake that he should return as early as one o'clock. One o'clock passed—two o'clock failed to bring him, and the meeting was called to order.

Various reports were made of matters that had come to the ears of the planters on the borders within the last few hours, chiefly such as had been obtained of strolling Indians and hunters of the Packachoag tribe.

Quinsigamond Indians were still in bad humor, and the

Washakims were evidently preparing for war. The Hasinomissitts were sulky and reticent and made no effort at all to disguise their vicious inclinations toward the inhabitants of the plantation. The Asnebumskits and their neighbors, the Tehassits, held nightly pow-wows, but as none but sachems and chief warriors were admitted, the object could only be surmised.

Some great chief from a distance had been among them, so thought the praying Indians, who were among the gleaners of news and who really knew more than they cared to divulge, being divided between duty to their Christian teachers, and affection for a neighboring and kindred tribe. "It might," they said, "be Philip, or might be Brant, the great Mohawk chief, who had, as rumor gave it, been visiting among the lodges."

A Packachoag came to the Castle at this juncture, and requested audience with the pastor, giving as a reason that he was a praying Indian, and as such his first duty was to his religious teacher.

He was admitted, and declared to Parson Meekman, that, from the summit of Strawberry Hill,¹ looking westward, he had seen a great smoke, about twelve miles away, and in running towards it he saw at a distance a party of Indians in strange wampum and war paint.

Secreting himself he saw from the bush twenty Indians pass with many green scalps hanging at their girdles, and a white woman and child as prisoners.

¹ Leicester.

As near as he could divine they were last from Quaboag. The presumption was based upon the fact that there had been a recent massacre, as was evident from the green scalps, that being strong and fresh, they could have come but little distance; that there was no white settlement between Quinsigamond and Chicopee except Quaboag (Brookfield), and near at hand in the direction of Quaboag he had seen the great smoke.

On his way home this Indian had met a Wachusett, who was following a moose track, and was told by him that on the night before, the Washakims had killed two white men at Lancaster and had attempted to fire the town, but were discovered and repulsed.

The question now before the meeting was fight or flight.

It needed no further evidence of malicious purpose on the part of the savages, but to what extent it had proceeded, or how widely it was entertained, was yet a mystery.

Sergeant and the two Rices, with Curtis and half a dozen others, argued that there was really no occasion for alarm; that to put, as far as possible, the plantation in the best attitude of defense, to post some few of the best hunters for pickets, and to use the praying Indians as scouts was all that was necessary. In case of attack, the Castle, they said, was easily accessible to the planters and their families, seasonable warning of the approach of hostile Indians in threatening numbers would be given by the trusty Packachoag scouts, and once within the

Castle walls the position was impregnable. There would be no danger of a long siege. Indians are too impatient to maintain one for any length of time. They soon tire.

The parson, whose proficiency at exhortation and prayer was only exceeded by his propensity for fighting, a disposition held in laudable abeyance by his sense of duty and propriety as a Christian minister, addressed the moderator according to his usual method with the prelude of a text:

“‘I came not to bring peace but a sword.’ Hath not the Lord our God said, ‘I will scatter them into corners. I will make the remembrance of them to cease from among men. For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and their rock is not as our rock, I will make their feet to slide in due time.’ What promise, my dear hearers, could be stronger? or what imprecation could be deeper? ‘I will whet my glittering sword. Rejoice, oh my people, for I will avenge the blood of my servants, saith the Lord.’ Oh, my dear people; you who are counted among the elect, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb, do you not see in this the promise of Divine aid? ‘I will whet my glittering sword.’ That means war, my hearers. And is it not a well phrased and a well timed incentive to you to gird on the armor of righteousness and to cleave your way through this Sodom of heathenism as the duly appointed executors of the wrath of God?’”

And now, by copious citations of corresponding emergencies, where the chosen people of God had laid waste the substance of idolators and annihilated the minions of

darkness, he made it perfectly obvious that it was only necessary to march around this Jericho of wickedness, blowing upon the ram's horn of faith, and the walls of this city of abominations would be leveled with the dust.

But although that method of procedure might have been in an eminent degree adapted to the condition and purposes of the Jews, three thousand years ago, before nature had revised her code, it was difficult to make its present feasibility apparent to the more practical mind of the Parish of Quinsigamond.

Comfort Hart, of Packachoag, remarked that if the parson's ram's horn was a mere figure of speech, intended to suggest the use of an iron mortar, with gunpowder for a blast, he could quite agree with him, provided they could get the mortar.

He had always opposed measures intended to injure or defraud the original owners of the soil, but affairs assume a new aspect when the Indians become the aggressors and resort to force. "It's a wild dance we ha' led the heathen, an' it's nae much wonder they should 'kick' like Jeshurun of old. In me heart I can nae much bleem them. But if the fault be theirs, or if the fault be ours, i' the commencement, it is nae matter now. They ha' dug up the hatchet, an' we ha' nae choice left but to gie them blaw for blaw."

Until to-day the Scotchman had been as non-combative as the Quaker Danson, and this declaration of a readiness to resist, and even to act on the offensive, was pleasing to

the planters, for Comfort was a sturdy man and well known as a bold one.

Jim Pyke said without rising, "If the Lord has really promised all the parson tells for (and the parson ought to know if he's ter be trusted), I guess it'll be safest ter leave him ter finish up the job. He cuts a bigger swath than we ken."

No one knew just what to make out of Jim Pyke; none could fix his precise mental status; whether he was a wag, a wit, or a blunderhead, no one felt quite certain.

Captain Henchman said: "In my opinion there is but one proper course to pursue; we must remove the women and children at once to Marlborough, where they will be safe and cared for, and then we may feel at least more assured, if not quite so desperate when compelled to assume the defensive, for we shall have no non-combatants to look after, and if we must retreat we shall then be able to do better execution upon the savages."

And the deacon agreed with him. It seemed the prevailing opinion that this course was the wisest to adopt, although Sergeant and Gershom Rice vigorously opposed it as a virtual abandonment of the soil.

"To send our families away," said Gershom, "is to show the enemy at once our weakness and to assure them of our distrust of the resources at command. We need only be watchful and ready. If occasion calls for it we may place our women and children in the stockade, while both from the Castle and the Castle Tavern we may ply them critters with bullets to their hearts' content. But

I'm only one; majority rules in Ameriky. If the majority says go, I'm with ye. But you know the Tavern is fully commanded by the Castle, and the open fields about will give us a mighty good whack at 'em. 'Tham winders and loopholes wan't made for nothin'. Individiderwally I oppose desertion or any manner of retreat."

Digory Sergent was not an orator like Gershom. His vocabulary usually exhausted itself in about three syllables.

"I stick!" exclaimed he, as he brought the butt of his old flint-lock down upon the plank floor with a crash that would have ruined it, but for the straps of horseshoe iron the blacksmith had riveted to it to make it good for clubbing in case the ammunition should happen to give out in some unpleasantness with ugly Indians.

It was now three o'clock by the whittled nicks in the window sill sun-dial, and Captain Wing's continued absence had been several times adverted to, and was beginning to excite uneasiness, not to say apprehension.

It was almost, if not quite indispensable to know his sense of the matter in question. It had been not unfrequently noticed that his opinion, particularly in emergencies, had been equal to turning anything like an approximate to an equal balance in the scales of plantation policy.

The captain, in society or in an informal gathering, was free and easy of speech, without seeming to be loquacious; but in public, where what he said might prove of greater consequence, his reserve was an approach to reticence.

His speech was sharp and concise; his sentences abbreviated snatches; while in action he was quick, resolute, impetuous and persistent. He was of such men as make history. Wordy men shape it, manipulate it; minds glowing with the imaginative, if also analytical and logical, write it.

In that plantation of ninety adults, to the most of them the captain was a bell-wether. But there were men like the two Henchmans, Sergeant, Fisk, Payne, and the two Rices, to say nothing of the parson, who were a law unto themselves; who heard him respectfully, weighed his words profoundly, and then formed their own conclusions. They were too self-reliant to acknowledge leadership except when, for unity of action, they delegated powers. But even these men felt the depressing sense of vacancy in their deliberations as a consequence of the absence of this stripling, scarcely out of his teens.

Either of them would have been slow to admit as much, even to himself, but the fact was there.

But something has happened. Black Jake pokes his head into the assembly room. Into the Castle. Black Jake the serving man.

"Oh, my Lord! My Lord! Gemmans, Cap'n John's done gone for sure. Dem red debbils got Cap'n John for sartin! Oh, Deacon, Deacon! We mus' hab a resurrection! 'T won't do fer ter let Cap'n John go fer toast ter dat 'bomination er red wickedness. Oh, Deacon, call on de Lord fer ter help us right away. 'T won't be worf a fo-

pence ha-penny gin ter morrer. Do coax de Lord, Deacon, fer ter gib us a lift!"

Jake had scarcely finished his full-mouthed ejaculation before the Castle was emptied of people, and his plea for a petition went by unheeded.

Even the parson shouted as he hurried out, "prayer is good in its way, my brethren, but there's a time for all things!"

Each man was examining his flint and pan, as with scurrying footsteps he made his exit from the Castle.

Even the poor, meek, non-combative Quaker Danson, fell back upon the natural man and seized the sword of justice that had hung suspended over the Judge's bench since the memorable first court trial.

"What else would thee have me to do? Thee sees it is for the women and children this time, my darling, and the spirit of my fathers is upon me," he whispered to his wife, who questioned his carnal-mindedness as he crossed the threshold.

Outside the stockade, and in front of the Tavern, stood Black Pompey, alone, unattended, and from his bleeding mouth dangled a broken rein.

Pompey was reeking with sweat and begrimed with dust. His saddle was turned until the girth buckles were just back of the horse's withers; there was a deep gash in his neck, as if plowed by a glancing arrow, and as he stood smoking and panting, his red nostrils distended to their utmost and dripping with blood as a consequence of over-exertion; stamping and pawing, and

alternately lifting his head and staring up the north bridle-path down which he had come, or by an askant look rolling into sight the pearly white of his restless eyes, he seemed the impersonation of rage.

A well-bred horse in a fervor of excitement is a thing to be looked at, to be studied. There is purpose in his every movement, and in every glance of his eyes a meaning. He has grander phases of aspect than the casual observer—he who is incapable of sympathizing with other inferior brutes—might suspect.

But what could have happened to Captain John? Pompey could not have thrown him if he would, and he would not if he could, for when a rider sets his favorite horse one spirit dominates, and the passive other merges its identity into it. The horse had not fallen, or the knees would show discoloration, if not abrasion. The rider could not have been tossed in a stumble, for then he would have gone headlong and not have displaced the saddle. And what is that blood in the mouth? and the cut lip at the bit hold? The curb has been terribly jerked, and sideways, too. The gag has lacerated the tongue, but the chin shows no abrasion by the chain. It was done by a man on the ground. The rider was wrenched off his horse and threw his weight into one stirrup in his act of resistance. That turned the saddle. He was not wounded, or saddle or housing would be stained with blood. Who has attacked him? Not the Hill Indians. They worshipped him. Was it the Washakims? They know absolutely nothing about horses, and

none but one familiar with them would have caught the dangling curb-rein, and the bar line would n't have held the startled beast a second. He would have torn the head-stall into tatters, and whoever did this thing knew it.

However it might have happened, Captain John was gone, and the men looked into each other's faces questioningly, but said nothing. There was neither interrogation nor remark. The loss was too great, it was overpowering. Even those robust, headstrong, self-reliant men, who felt assured they were alone equal to any emergency incident to pioneer life; men who believed their own judgment as sufficient counsel in all things, looked watery about the eyes and felt an inexplicable weakness come over them. Felt as we do when some mortal prop,—a wife, a brother, a sister or a son fall out by the way.

The right arm of the plantation had been lopped off; and what was more than numbers, more than courage and hardihood, more than wisdom even, the genius of the hamlet had gone out from among them.

Jim Pyke said: "Tham critters have girdled the tree."

There will be wet eyes at the Castle Tavern to-night—wet eyes and an aching heart at Digory Sergeant's house, and all the plantation will bow its head in mourning, but a thousand souls shall be wafted to the Great Spirit on a cloud of fire and smoke for this untimely taking off.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RED MEN'S COUNCIL.

WHATEVER matters of importance occurred at the plantation were invariably known within an hour at Wigwam Hill, for however much the doctrine of Christianity might tend to restrain the restless spirit and wild habits of the savages, the love of home, which with them meant tribe, was sure to predominate, and in this connection it must not be forgotten that the Hill Indians and the Packachoags were of common stock; the Hill Indians being an offshoot from the Packachoags.

The fidelity of the praying Indians, who were ordinarily reliable and always ready to hazard their lives even, if need be, for the white men under whose teachings they had been converted, had one vulnerable point which not even the bonds of mutual faith could cover. They would conspire with you to go even to the most cruel extremities in matters relating to Indians of any particular tribe, except the one to which they were born, for patriotism with them did not extend to the nationality of which their tribe was a part, as the tribal compact was solely for purposes of defense against the warlike Mohawks, or the short-legged, roaming Canadian freebooters, but the moment a hand was raised to do violence against their

natal lodge there was not Gospel enough between Genesis and Revelation to restrain them.

Of the Hill Indians, the whites had made in all some two or three doubtful converts to Christianity. I say doubtful because, unlike the praying Packachoags, they were at best but lukewarm, and never became like them, zealous workers. But all who professed the faith were allowed to come and go at pleasure, in field or forest, in house or wigwam, and being constantly on the move, for they were veritable tramps—as espousing the cause of Christ invariably upset all habits of self-maintenance—nothing escaped their observation.

The Wigwam Hill converts, therefore, knew every move, and being the most sly and consummate eavesdroppers, knew almost every secret of their indulgent neighbors, the white men. They knew of the “big scare council,” as they termed it, and that very day at sunset it was fully reported at the Hill. They knew also of the riderless horse.

The little tribe heard of the first in silence, and of the last with expressions of unmingled sorrow, for Captain John had been much with them, and always as one of them, except as they instinctively paid deference to his obvious superiority, the effect of his life surroundings, civilization and education, added to a strong will and an evident honesty of purpose.

Upon the matter first spoken of they were silent because, since the night of the last visit of the Great Chief of Mount Hope, partial developments, enlisting hope, fear,

and superstition to a nearly equal degree, were accompanied by intimations of a plot, so startling, that if no hitch occurred in the denouement of a counter, King Philip would himself be proved a liar.

The Wigwam Hill Indians had already struck a trail, and five of the boldest, shrewdest, fleetest of them had been out a day, charged to their own discretion, no one knew whither.

Since we last saw these Indians meditating at least upon a compact with the Wampanoag, the old sorceress had been busy, if to be so absorbed with inner sense as to make the mind utterly oblivious to all things outward is to be busy. Had been so busy with brews, invocations, incantations and conjurings, that some of the more impressionable of the warriors verily believed they had seen appear at her enjoiment, life-like figures drawn in light upon the black escarpment of the hill at midnight.

There were impersonations and indications that upset all recent theories and conjectures, beside involving one great name in gross deception for the furtherance of a scheme. Indians have been accredited or discredited with believing that the God of Nature is the same yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, and that occurrences which were possible in the remote past may not be impossible to-day. They lack sound orthodox education. But however that may be, certain it was that Wigwam Hill was all astir with other matters than the league, the object of which was annihilation. They were even in humor to deprecate the taking off of Captain Wing for other con-

siderations than their own regard for the man, for as the breach widened between them and Philip, through suspicion of misrepresentation, bordering upon proof, they began to retrograde toward their first love.

The whites had been their nearest neighbors and they had always lived in peace with them; indeed they had repeatedly been the recipients of favors at their hands, and were many times beholden to them for kind offices. To be sure their chief had been tried in their courts for murder, but even after confession he had been acquitted, and that was evidence at least of standing by justice.

The Hill Indians had suspected the whites, either of direct murder upon the person of their chief or of complicity in effecting his death; but subsequent developments seemed to beggar the assumption, and Wandee, their oracle in life and precious almost to idolization in memory, had while living counselled them to be brothers with the whites.

Sagamore John, the Hoorawannonit of Packachoag¹ the sire of Wandee by a Quinsigamond squaw, now an old man and accredited with wisdom, had paid them a visit at the Hill where he was well received, notwithstanding he had used his utmost endeavors—by well-considered and plausible arguments, aided by that verbally pictorial eloquence which facilitates apprehension by presenting ideas arrayed in metaphor and allegory—to dissuade the Nipnets from joining issues with Philip or even

¹ The chief's tribal name.

seriously considering the subject of offensive alliance, and had with his own little tribe remained firmly aloof, even refusing to promise neutrality in the event of war.

His visit was in the midst of the awakening of the tribe to the machinations of the king, through the strange intimations, weird, half appreciable conjurings and shadowy forecasts of that crazy occultist, the squaw sorceress.

Red John found the Indians in the deepest mourning, as Indians mourn,—moody, solitary, taciturn. No two Indians could be seen together. Not even a squaw or pappoose dared intrude upon their silent loneliness. Not an Indian left the Hill for any purpose, not even for food, of which they were sorely in need.

To stroll about, you might have seen an Indian here and there, seated on a rotting log, seated on a boulder, or a crag, or leaning against a tree, looking down into the lake with his eyes, into the mist of futurity with his mind. To them it was an utter lapse between time past and time to come.

The Quinsigamonds had lost a leader and John of Packachoag an only son. To the one was left a vacancy that nature refused to span; an indefinite idea of future existence, an idea based upon no revelation, and referable to no authority, other than the vague inheritance of a dogma, the child of irresponsibility, but yet of hope at least the phantom,—for had not their sires declared that they themselves had held communion with the long since dead. And could not the old squaw conjure up at will the transient, flitting, semi-transparent mist of something

that bore semblance to the human form and facial feature? and did she not, at least in seeming, hold animated converse with the shadow of her conjuring?

But to John of Packachoag a life to come was as certain as judgment; judgment as a resurrection; resurrection as the word of God. And to him the interim was simple sleep; and what to him or they that the sleep should last till Gabriel's trumpet sounded? It was folding of the hands at twilight, and wakening with the dawn. And so he argued with the Hill Indians that night in council, and his kindly sympathy, more earnest from the fact of mutual loss, added to his hopeful word pictures of a life to come and the beatific conditions of the hereafter, broke the spell and roused them from the paralytic mood that had oppressed both mind and body.

Invested with words intelligible to us, this was the expression of Hoorawannonit the Sagamore of Packachoag, given through broken, verbal, impassioned utterance, garnished by metaphor and simile and superinforced by profuse gesticulation.

"He is not dead but sleepeth. Our Lord and Master, the man Jesus, gave his life that through his death atonement might come for an entailed sin, and for the manifold sins of succeeding generations, and that through that atonement we might have everlasting life, since, when those whom we say die, die only in this our visible body, while the spirit, the real essence, and although unseen the counterpart of that which we lay down, and itself as real a body, merely sleeps. As the tired hunter lies down and

loses himself to things about him until strength returns to him through rest, so we shall, so Wandee did, lie down for a season of rest, and when that rest shall be complete, and his strength restored, he shall awaken to a new life, with hands that palsy not with age, and with feet that cannot tire; for what is death but a lengthy sleep? and what is the grave but rest?"

While listening to the comforting promises of Sagamore John, and revolving in mind the not very discordant voiceless assurances of the old squaw in her ghostly machinations, the savage mind resolved the discrepancy of time into unity, by attributing to the sagamore an excusable miscalculation, and that partially settled in favor of a like ultimate result, the tribe awoke from its solemn stupor, and as the embers of the council fire were smouldering in their ashes, Sagamore John placed the little tribe under benediction and passed down and out into the night with his moccasins pointing toward Packachoag.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANXIETY AND INDECISION AMONG THE PLANTERS.

ON the Thursday following the "big scare council" the whites began to collect early in the day, for, beyond chopping wood enough to last from day to day, they were in no mood to labor.

Digory Sergent had set his foot down firmly that he would not budge, war or no war, and Mrs. Sergent as flatly refused to seek safety in flight and leave her husband behind, while the children, including Martha (who, by the way, was step-daughter to the present Mrs. Sergent), had declared that to leave both father and mother in the woods with hostile Indians lurking about, was greater wickedness than they were capable of.

But Digory was the first man to put in an appearance that morning. He would not go, but of course he must attend the meeting, for a meeting of the planters was almost as important as a town meeting, and a town meeting, where a freeholder might exercise his right of suffrage even in general government matters, was too new a wrinkle in the body politic to be relegated to neglect.

The Rices, Hart, and Curtis were soon at hand, and before ten o'clock in the day every adult male inhabitant, as well as most of the women, were assembled at the Castle anxiously awaiting the result of the conference.

At ten o'clock the meeting was called to order, and after a few remarks from the moderator, Deacon Henschman, relative to the present emergency, in the course of which he feelingly alluded to the Providential chastisement of the community in the taking off of Captain Wing, and duly admonished the believers to foster a spirit of resignation and trust in Him who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," he proceeded to charge, so far as his personal opinion might go, the Washakims with the recent atrocity which had placed in mourning every family in the plantation of Quinsigamond.

The deacon also called to mind numerous acts of treachery on the part of the Washakims, and among other things referred to the continued absence of Archer since the mournful event, and confessed to an impressive surmise that upon that day a double murder had been perpetrated.

He repeated the purport of various vague rumors of an intended uprising of all the savages and mentioned the circumstances of several recent murders which had occurred at about the same time, and in widely separated communities, as indications of concerted action intended to arouse the whites to the commission of some overt act which might be used as a pretext for a general massacre in retaliation.

He warmly deprecated the necessity for abandoning the plantation, leaving their homes and sacrificing the results of toil, patience and privation.

He remarked that many whose life savings were

here invested must necessarily become bankrupt by flight, for even should they ever find it practicable to return, it would be to wasted clearings, and to cellars filled with the ashes of their former dwellings; for it was well known in the history of Indian warfare that the savages regarded every form of structural improvement in the light of an encumbrance; a foolish luxury, fit only for the enjoyment of laboring, civilized effeminacy, and beneath the dignity of the free-born sons of earth, who gained a subsistence without toil, and who reaped where they had not sown.

As the climax of all savage villainy, the very acme of heathenish deviltry, the deacon alluded to the massacre and burning of the peaceable settlement at Quaboag, which an Indian runner had confirmed and reported in detail on the previous day.

“And now” said the deacon, “in justice and mercy to those whom a kind Providence has intrusted to our tender care and keeping, such as are allied to us by the bonds of love and blood relationship, by the necessity of reliance and the duty of protection, there seems to be but one course to pursue. To remove, such as cannot bear arms, at once to Marlborough there to await our coming, if driven by superior force to abandon the plantation, or until the threatening aspect of affairs has subsided.”

The deacon's remarks were followed in a similar strain by Prentice, Payne, Curtis and others, and when the sense of the meeting was called for, there was hardly a dissenting voice. Even old Digory said: “The deacon's words

are good and sensible. I don't think myself that this 'ere 's any place for women folks."

But at least one woman in that assembly demurred.

"If Mr. Sergent stays I shall stay. He can do as he pleases."

Jim Pyke's wife also took exceptions to the ruling. She "would not step over into the promised land to drink the milk and honey of safety while Jim Pyke was cookin' his victuals with one hand and shootin' Injuns with t' other. For the Lord's sake! What dew you s'pose I took Jim fer better or wus fer if I couldn't pull an even yoke with him in the wust? You ken make up yer mind Deacon that Pyke's wife stays, an' if wust comes ter wust, Jim may cook while I shoot, or I'll shoot while Jim cooks. Lor' sakes-alive! yer may talk desertion ter yer city gals, but Jim Pyke's wife ain't no such a woman. Bless yer heart, Deacon, I an' Jim come here together fer ter settle, an' that are ort ter settle it, an' 't will, so fur 's I 'low yer ter count on me."

And there was more than a murmur of female applause went up from that log castle. Educated, well-bred ladies,—for there were not a few such in the settlement, took Jim Pyke's wife by the hand, looked into her thin, pale, care-worn face, and with tears in their eyes, and in their throats that sense of impeded respiration which comes of deep emotion, they thanked her and called down the blessing of God upon the "dear, little soul" who had taught them what now appeared so plain a duty. And for the

next five minutes of that hour the female element was in the ascendant.

Gershom Rice, catching the infection of nobility from the grandeur of personality which woman's trial so often evokes, moved a reconsideration of the vote, humorously remarking:

"If we proceed to carry the measure into effect, I'm afraid the war between the sexes will be more fatal—to happiness at least—than the worst we apprehend from the Injuns."

The vote was rescinded, notwithstanding the parson labored hard to check the growing revulsion from the original vote while the question was pending. Cool, calculating, bovine courage and unswerving persistency were his characteristics. He knew little of the softer moods engendered in the breast of man where woman is acknowledged mistress and inspirator.

"Why in the world a woman should wish to remain here while it is absolutely certain she can be of no manner of use, but, on the contrary, an encumbrance, passes ordinary comprehension," testily ejaculated he.

The parson was a good enough man, a brave man and a kind one, but he had no wife, no family, no children, and the day in which he might have been susceptible to a young love that grows in wedlock was long past. There were in life, influences to which, being ignorant of, he was not amenable. Affections which he could not fathom. Depths of love to which celibates and anchorites are strangers.

He was an honest man, but he mistakenly took to be literally construed the precept, "wives obey your husbands."

Furthermore he truly believed that the communicants of the Church of Christ, under Calvin, were the chosen people of God. That this wilderness was a veritable duplication of the promised land; that America was Protestantism's rightful inheritance, and that the command of the Most High, laid upon Israel, to dispossess the heathen and to despoil them of their goods, to cut them off utterly from the face of the earth by fire and sword, was in a notable degree applicable to this particular instance.

And the parson was a wise man, and very well knew that the weaker half of the social fabric is an ugly encumbrance when "Greek meets Greek."

But it was well for him that the vote to rescind was passed over his head, or the growing feminine indignation would have resulted in his pastoral deposition.

He would have learned to his dismay that there is a power behind the throne that asks no let and bides no hindrance.

The meeting was dissolved without action. The women were to stay. Pyke's wife's speech had subdued the garrison and invested the Castle. But it is not certain that the temerity of the women did not cost the settlers the plantation, for the refusal to leave hastened the general evacuation, where, if the weak arm had been put out of harm's way, the sound one, armed completely as it was,

and amply fortified, might perhaps have successfully resisted any combination of force with which they could have been beset, especially as the rage of the Indian soon exhausts itself. His persistency relaxes; he becomes impatient of delay, and his fickle temper grasps at new promises and flies to fresher fields of action.

Discretion, that "better part of valor," was on the parson's side, and he wisely simulated acquiescence.

CHAPTER XV.

STORMING THE CASTLE.

WHILE the whites at the plantation were undecided, waiting, in the vain hope that after all the outrages had been committed by predatory bands, and were not the result of a wide spread conspiracy, they had yet been using their utmost endeavors to place themselves in the best possible state of defense, not forgetting to provide by every available means for a safe retreat should it be forced upon them.

Captain Ephraim Curtis, who with a party of armed men, chiefly from the lower settlements, had been scouring the country to the west, and had actually engaged the enemy upon two or three occasions, the last being at Quabog, where for a day and a night after the massacre and burning of the settlement, he with his command had been besieged in a log cabin belonging to the place, was now at hand, and his skill and fame as an Indian fighter served greatly to allay the fears of the timid and feeble and to encourage the strong.

Being a fearless man and yet commendably cautious; adept in all the wiles and arts of the Indians themselves, and master of their school of warfare; acquainted with the peculiarities of the different tribes and able not only

to distinguish between them on sight, or even loose description, but to actually gauge their fighting numbers, and the temper and capacity of each, he was just the man to govern in the emergency, should hostilities open at their doors.

Meantime the Wigwam Hill Indians had not been idle. Prompted by the significant mutterings of the old squaw sorceress, and by her pretended or other preternatural visions, to attempt the solution of a mystery in which were involved not only interests vital to themselves but of deep concern to their neighbors, the whites, they had sent out spies, they hardly knew exactly what for, as the old squaw's visions, warnings, and intimations, as they came and went, seemed to bear no sequent relation to one another, but were abrupt, disconnected and indefinite, like the vague wanderings of an unbalanced mind.

These spies had been sent out and had returned, not full masters of the secret they had hoped to unravel, but bringing ample evidence that their suspicions of Washakim treachery had been well grounded, and that the squaw was mistress of more than normal insight. That to her at times, distance was compressed into proximity, that opacity was no absolute bar to vision, and that she was at least partial mistress of the passage way between things seen and the intangible ephemera of spirit life. In connection with her strange machinations—if machinations they really were—they remembered the ghost upon the hill scarp that struck dumbness to the Narragansett king. They remembered the figures of light that glided so

weirdly over the rocks and along the ledges and vanished into thin air—into the blackness of midnight. They remembered the voices that seemed to proceed from the cave—the cave high up and near the north end of the perpendicular wall, now choked by that mass of debris,—fragments of rocks dismembered from the cliff by the action of frosts in two hundred winters. They remembered the whispered warnings that came over the lake at evening, came seemingly in answer to her incantations while she brewed her mess of poison ivy, dogwood and noxious weeds, and talked familiarly with things unseen, mental projections upon vacancy, whispered answers, not direct, but like echoes from the opposite bluffs, groans, like the wail of torture long endured, that seemed to burden the air upon the hill top and to roll down like weighty matter upon the hush of the birch wigwams. They had not yet learned of Cotton Mather the super-devilishness of witchcraft, or they would have drowned her in her boiling brew.

Enough had now come to the ears of the Hill Indians to convince them that the Washakims were not only still their deadly enemies, but that the league, of which they were among the most active members, had conspired: first to deeply injure them, and then to bind them to the interest of the scheming Narragansett, through the basest form of deception.

So much were they enraged by the actual harm so far accomplished, and so indignant that Philip should have made them his dupes rather than his free and confidential

allies, that they were not long in deciding to do their utmost to favor the planters by all covert means, while, through apprehension of consequences in event of disaster to their friends, they outwardly seemed to favor the alliance and the general massacre which was the ultimatum of its designs. And the first act of amity toward the planters should be to make them fully aware of the purposes of Philip and the methods by which he aimed to effect the extermination of the hated race.

Three days had now passed, days of the deepest solicitude the whites had ever experienced since the first time they forded the shallows at the north end of the lake to strike their axes into the old forests of the west and proclaim their occupancy of the Quinsigamond grant. Day by day, without citation, even without tacit understanding, they had regularly convened at early morning at the Castle Tavern. No one could say exactly for what they had assembled, but each instinctively realized that in union only was safety, if safety was to be found, and that a common cause makes common brotherhood its correlative.

Little differences, such as are sure to occur to some degree in small communities where each as a freeman acknowledges none better born; some that grow out of diversities of opinion, some coming of envy, and small jealousies arising in disparity of conditions, of culture, of intellect, property, or of official or social position; all were for the time buried in an oblivion as complete as if that promised day of final adjustment, when "the first shall be

last, and the last first," was already at hand, and for the time at least, a whole community returned to its primal status, a condition of free and equal. But on the morning of the fourth day, at a time when it happened, though without preconcertion, that beside the men, every woman in the plantation was in or about the Castle or Tavern, some Indians were seen coming down the declivity by the Bell Pond path,¹ and for a wonder they were not recognized as praying Indians who invariably wore as a distinguishing badge, an old coat, breeches, or cocked hat,—some cast-off garment of white men's wear. They were not of the converts. What could it mean? They were Quinsigamonds, but the Hill Indians had of late been exceeding chary of their visits, had even more than once expressed malignity toward the whites, and Indian like, had sulked and skulked, But they were Wigwam Hill Indians and were their best fighting men, ten in number.

A half dozen of the old flint-locks of the time dropped into position of ready; as many flint hammers clicked above the priming pans, and as many planters stepped to the front and gave the customary challenge: "Halt! Where are you going? and what have you to say?"

No sooner was the party challenged than each laid his tomahawk on the ground as a token of peaceful intent, and moving forward to within a few feet of the planters addressed them: "Hill Injun all good; Hill Injun no

¹ Bell Pond on Millstone Hill, near its summit, and equal distance from the Castle and the lake.

fight. Dig hole, hide tomahawk. Big heap Injun fight. All Quinnapoxit, all Tehassit, all Washakim, Nipnets all. Big chief come,—Philip the Wampanoag. Philip lead all men, Cold country, hot country, and where the sun sleeps. Philip great man, brave man, bad man. Take big heap scalp. White brave die. White squaw cry; pappoose nowhere. Hill Injun cry too. Injun nebber cry 'fore. Hill Injun sorry. Injun hungry, white squaw make bread. Injun tired, white squaw gib drink. Injun gib leetle bit deer meat, white squaw gib big heap salt, say swap. Injun no got salt. White pappoose like Injun. Injun make play. Pappoose all dead; so bad, you guess. White man got book, say Great Spirit talk; do' know; mebbe. Injun 'fraid Great Spirit. Great Spirit talk for Injun, say tell white man go small time; go now, old squaw say go, Great Spirit say go! Go! 'fore sun-up." And the Indians lifted their tomahawks from the ground and walked rapidly away in single file back by the Bell Pond trail toward the lake.

There was no mistaking the import of the warning these wild Indians had left that morning with their old friends, the planters. The very worst that could be dreamed of was conveyed in those abbreviated bolts of broken English, but they had given bane and antidote, and cruel as was the alternative the white man must perforce accept it.

A meeting was convened upon the spot. Short arguments were the rule. It needed but a suggestion to call out unanimity in the choice of Ephraim Curtis as dic-

tator in the emergency. "We may as well be ready to stand at his back," said Comfort Hart. "Every man to his trade. Ephraim's trade is war, but he must have the tools." Without a dissenting voice Curtis was elected to act upon his own discretion, and without hesitation he announced his intention to retreat upon Marlborough the following morning.

Digory Sergent approved of the retreat so far as all but himself was concerned. "But," said Digory, "I have ploughed and planted, and, God willing I will reap the harvest." But he "sowed the wind." He urged his wife and daughters to seek safety in flight, but all to no purpose. They would not go. To them desertion looked like fear, and there was too much of old Digory in the blood to take counsel of it. It needed no reflection to bring the daughters to that resolve. They had the stout courage of the father and the dutiful faith of the mother. Even the baby in the mother's arms must abide the consequences of the father's temerity. The self-assured, womanly Martha, the beautiful Susan, the half of whose seventeen summers had been passed in all the taste, refinement and culture of the élite of Boston society, where her beauty, sweetness of temper and vivacious humor had been the open sesame to any household, and where she had been schooled and honored like a rich man's daughter; the little Nettie, years short of her teens, each and all must be sacrificed at the shrine of a father's uncalculating assurance and rash daring.

Night once again settled down upon the doomed plan-

tation. The lowing of home-driven cattle was hushed in the sheds; the katydids disputed and quarreled in the solitary chestnut tree by the tavern stoop, and the whip-poor-will chimed in a dismal chorus. But there came up a voice from Bimelick that fatal night, so dolefully sad, so painfully articulate, so much the prognostic of evil, to a mind alive to fear and susceptible to superstition, that when it uttered its warning: "Better beware!" as it seemed to say, more than one planter stepped from his bed and pushing aside the curtain peered out into the night to see if the threatened danger was really at hand.

"Ten." The clock was striking: "Eleven—twelve o'clock! Twelve o'clock!"—and a long-drawn, clear, cat-like yell. It was not like some house cat's yell, but that more startling, horrible screech of his untamed, tameless, wild cousin. It rang through the tree-tops; rang over the settlement; rang in frightful echoes; rang thousand-tongued like the knell of doomsday—over—around—encompassing—covering the plantation with a mantle of vocal horrors. You never heard it, did you? You never will. It belonged to another age and was left out of your legacy. It was not the wild cat. No short-tailed brindled terror crouched in the fork of a tree; no feline utterance ever approximated to it in ferocity. Seven hundred savages, drawn from the four winds of heaven, from every point of the compass; from the St. Lawrence, from the Connecticut, and from the promontory which divides the great Fall River bay from the Narragansett and Popsquash

harbor, with many Nipnets, had swooped down to execute the decree of Fate upon the plantation.

But the planters were prepared. The warning of the Hill Indians had not been lost upon them. Every white man, whether in bed or on guard, had by his side a musket and sixty rounds of spherical death, and every man, woman and child, with the exception of Sergeant and family, was for the night ensconced in the Castle or Tavern. The men were mostly in the Tavern, and between that and the Castle was a covered way in the form of a hastily constructed stockade, slit with loopholes for musket practice.

And the Indians established a burial place. They dug graves at sunrise, under the red oaks south of the Castle an eighth of a league, after the harvest of souls; after the fearful night; and five-score of them were left sitting bolt upright, with arms in their hands and maize on the ear by their sides, facing the morning,—waiting for the resurrection.

There they waited by the east bridle-path, the Blackstone trail; under the red oaks waited; until we of the nineteenth century saw them exhumed.¹

Captain Curtis was at his post no wit dismayed; only seeming to gloat over his opportunity. He had scored for the red men, had lost an ear and part of his scalp, and

¹ Their bones were exhumed at the excavation for the school-house corner of Summer and School streets about the year 1836. Some, by mistake or misinformation, have supposed them to be bones of early settlers—but why, then, the stone weapons found? or the peculiar posture of the skeletons?

had charged them with sundry flesh wounds, and the day of reckoning had come.

The women and children were safe in the Castle and not at their homes—as in Brookfield and Lancaster—and all the men had to do was to fight. The terraced and battlemented roof of the Castle afforded ample survey of the surroundings, with the glacis at hand and the scattering forest beyond;—if only daylight would come. Even as it was the moonlight was sufficient to expose an Indian when crossing the open in front and upon either side, and when thirty or forty lay dead, and their comrades who tried to carry them off, tarried with them, they desisted awhile.

The windows in the Tavern, the loop-holes in the stockade and the battlemented roof and tower, manned by sixty sharpshooters, each provided with sixty rounds of shot, were odds against seven hundred bowmen, if under fair discipline, and if only the moonlight would last. But a black cloud was rising up over the hill on the west, the hill toward Tehassit; and moving on, a tempest without rain, it soon enveloped the settlement in darkness, and under its cover both Castle and Tavern were fiercely beset. The Tavern was soon in flames, and by its light the Indians again became the unthinking target for bullets as at word of command sixty fire-locks flashed out as one, and sixty red-skins rolled in the dust, or crept away bleeding and maimed.

Desultory firing continued until morning. The fire at the Tavern was quenched, but new ones were set, and at

every such occasion several of the enemy paid the forfeit of their temerity with life. Morning came; the morning the white men had prayed for, but it brought with its light new perils, for, although all were so far safe and sound in person, it was evident that not only was ammunition getting low, but that where they had reckoned upon scores for an enemy it was now certain they were numbered by hundreds.

The odds now apparent were two great, for even could the Castle be kept from fire, the besiegers might suffer, but the garrison must speedily starve. It was evident the Castle must be abandoned forthwith, and Curtis devised a retreat which was speedily put in execution. He, with several young men, accompanied by Parson Meekman who was ever ready for anything like a forlorn hope—save the one without Christ—made a sally, and reaching some sheltering trees, opened the war again according to true Indian tactics. Whether or not we try to account for the white man's superior skill and success in the barbarous methods of warfare, by giving him credit for greater intelligence, agility, or courage, certain it is that when equally armed, and equal in numbers, the Indian is no match for him. He only excels in the midnight foray, when the whites are asleep.

Once in position the men opened fire at long range, from behind a tree, a stump, or a log, and their fire told with deadly effect. Whenever an Indian, inspired by hatred, revenge, or ambition for fame among his fellows, aimed to get within bow-shot length, and in doing so dis-

closed enough of his person to be covered with sight and bead, an Indian fell or hurriedly left his post disabled, and as the white men dodged from tree to tree, but little annoyed by bowmen kept at such distance, the fugitives poured out of the Castle, the women and children in the van, while the planters brought up the rear, regardless of consequences to themselves as they made a breastwork of their bodies against the nearly spent arrows that were showered upon them.

It was now that Parson Meekman began to exhibit in bold relief the other extreme of his dual nature, hitherto manifest chiefly in words. He had, times without number, succored individual savages in distress, had commended them to God in earnest, heart-felt prayer, bound up their wounds, fed their hungry with an unsparing hand, had nursed their sick and done for them manifold little kindnesses. He had in all things obeyed the injunction laid by Jesus his Master upon Simon Peter. But with the shadow of an uprising or turbulence, or any manner of insubordination—for the relative position was always that of ruler and subject—the sword of speech had leaped from its scabbard and whirled in a tirade of pious but terrible invective.

That he was kind, considerate, and even tender, had been a thousand times evinced in the past by little tokens of sympathy and as many self-sacrificing efforts to alleviate distress among his neighbors, but it remained for this hour to bring out the sterner qualities of his being

and to demonstrate that, notwithstanding his proclivity for threatening speech, "a barking dog may bite."

The rollicking, dare-devil element, true to the blood of his Irish ancestry, unsubdued, but held in laudable abeyance after his espousal of Protestantism and elevation to the dignity of a pastorate, seemed to reassert its existence and exemplify itself in that forward, unflinching courage which utterly abjures that "better part of valor." He handled a fire-lock like an old woodsman. He aimed with the accuracy of a keen eye, a practiced hand, a steady nerve, and an unruffled, even buoyant temper. Every time his flint struck fire an Indian took his ticket of leave and started for the happy hunting grounds, and when, as on more than one occasion occurred, a handful of the most resolute of the enemy ventured a hand-to-hand conflict, they fell back dead, or discomfited, and convinced that the parson was as much an expert in the use of temporal as of spiritual weapons, and that the half broad-ax he carried slung in his belt was quite the equivalent of the Indian war-club or hatchet of stone. At one time, when the rear-guard were sorely pressed and for a moment demoralized by the torture of a hundred wounding arrows shot at short range, the parson threw himself into the breach, and in the attitude of command shouted—"By the God of Abraham! We will not succumb to this Babylonish whore—close up and give the heathen another round!" And at the next breath a volley tore from the freshly determined guard that struck terror to the too daring archers. What Curtis was as a commander and

scout, Parson Meekman—Mike Rafferty that was—proved himself in physical strength and desperate valor as a leader of the forlorn hope, or captain of the rear guard.

By slow degrees the retreating party made their way, many of them wounded, but none dead nor even mortally hurt, until they passed the ford at the north end of the lake. The well-directed aim of the musket men put it out of the question for the Indians to use their tomahawks with serious effect, and the arrows, at long range, were not formidable weapons.

Some new idea seemed now to take possession of the allies,—some scheme more promising, and with one mind they abandoned the pursuit and returned to the plantation where several score had remained to complete the work of destruction.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD DIGORY YIELDS TO ENTREATY.

IN a field so wide as that your scribe has selected, of a period so remote, and with authentic annals so meagre, nothing would seem more invitingly easy—supposing that he, the writer, was gifted with the necessary constructive ability—than to abandon the sequence, if not the entire substance of historical events, and to rally upon the imagination for incidents, so endeavoring to enhance interest by startling innovations and fictitious embellishments. But as legendary and traditional lore of the epoch still abound, for the ear of him who will stop to hear catches or broken recitals by octogenarians who, through the years have kept green in memory fireside tales of the weal and woe of a township, the course would seem unpardonable, even though it might promise the author some feeble recompense in the way of public acknowledgment of a tithe of originality.

The whites, with the exception of Digory Sergent and family, had made safe retreat to Marlborough, and the Indians—who had found little to compensate them for danger and hardship incurred, while skilled men like Ephraim Curtis and his determined corps fought them in their own fashion and declined leaving them even a scalp

as a trophy; men who could demonstrate their omnipresence and yet be rarely visible—had returned to the plantation to review their scene of devastation and to enjoy its fruits.

The retreat had been consummately planned and so bravely carried into execution that even Black Pompey and Archer's mare had been conducted free from harm by Black Jake and were now safely stalled in Marlborough. Archer himself had been absent from the settlement several days and was, supposably, a prisoner among the Washakims, or had fallen a victim to their murderous inclinations. There were those of the planters who surmised that Eugene had tired of country life and made his way on foot to Boston. The tramp was nothing for men of that day,—but why should he have left a very valuable piece of horse-flesh? It was improbable, to say the least.

There was little left in the way of booty to compensate an Indian for the hazard of an open battle with such an enemy, or even to engage in a midnight foray, as whatever property not portable, the whites possessed, excepting several barrels of rum, which were stored in the cellars and refused to burn in the cask in the general conflagration, was regarded by the Indians with contempt. Buildings, agricultural implements, such as they were, furniture, everything a white man esteems as personal property, was to them a superfluity, beneath the dignity of a forest lord to put to use, for however ridiculous might seem the assumption of superiority on the part of

the savage, certain it was that after the first glamour produced by gay attire, and the long-range death in the white man's weapon was over, they heartily despised a race that yoked its men to one end of a plow and at the same time adorned its women with jewels and painted feathers.

But two objects engrossed the Indians' care when once the hatchet had been lifted from the earth and his moccasins had been turned to the war-path. First his savage pride must be gratified by the possession of those tangible evidences of bravery, those true ornaments of the warrior, finer than blankets of beaver, richer than robes of otter, more beautiful to look upon than the gold of the white man, or than wealth of native wampum,—the scalp locks of an enemy.

The next matter worthy of consideration was the utter destruction of all that an enemy, if a white man, might prize as property, and more especially his abode; and the better the dwelling, the more certain and thorough the destruction.

With this disposition of mind dominant, the Indians, to the number of seven hundred, less some ninety who fell during the short siege and pursuit, a motley mass gleaned from the four quarters of the north country, from the wilds of Ontario, from the shores of the St. Lawrence, the forests of the Penobscot, from the Mohawk wood by the Connecticut, and from the Narragansett region on the south—of the last a few only were sent up by Philip as inspirators—and from several of the Nipnet tribes,

with the spirit of devastation, the effect of the persuasive tongue of that eloquent diplomat and bold leader,—the Wampanoag chief—boiling in their bosoms, and each bent on working havoc in his own wild way, for as yet they were, in Philip's absence, leaderless as a pack of wolves, except as whim or circumstances threw them for the hour under the fierce guidance of Tehuanto the Washakim, or the still ruder king of the Ontarios, they had returned to the doomed settlement and seizing the smoking embers of the already ruined tavern, castle, and store, were not long in reducing every remaining structure to a bed of ashes. Not all the property was destroyed, for the charred barrels of rum were seasonably rescued from the debris of the tavern and store. So far the houses of Sergeant and Jonas Rice of Sagatabscot, and of Gershom Rice and Hart of Packachoag, being far away, had received no part of their attention.

It was a sorry day for the Sergeant family as the smoke of the ruined settlement darkened the northern sky. But Digory was still obstinate and immovable. So utterly did he despise a race incapable of fighting face to face with an enemy, and so much did he rely upon his faithful watch dog to give him seasonable warning of prowling Indians by day or night, and upon his own prowess to make good the defense of his log castle against the dozen or so he imagined had wrought the mischief that, as he saw the towers of smoke climbing the midland and projecting themselves upon and above the blue bosom of the Wachusett and knew its fearful import, he declared that the planters must

have been remiss in watchfulness and so taken unawares, or perhaps they had fled at the first hostile demonstration of the prowling besiegers. For himself he was more determined than ever. "Would he skulk out and retire because a pack of wolves invested the grounds and threatened the house? or would he remain in his bullet-proof domicile and pick off his assailants one by one until fatigue and loss should incline them to engage in some more hopeful enterprise?

"But, father," urged Susan, who had been an attentive listener to his vocalized revery, "if they have ruined the settlement and murdered, the Lord only knows how many, how can you, single-handed, be able to cope with them?

"If they were a handful of Indians, who have done this mischief, possibly four of us, well-armed as we are with muskets, might hope to withstand them until their frenzy would give place to impatience, and they might draw off to the execution of some new and easier scheme, where the people are less prepared and resistance less obstinate. But, father, no few Indians have done this thing. I would not pretend to be wiser than you; but consider if you yourself, with our aid at the loopholes, feel assured you might successfully resist a squad of perhaps twenty, do you imagine that the planters, with sixty stout men, well armed as we are, were likely to succumb to any inconsiderable force? And did not John tell us when he was alive and here, that a war was imminent? That the great Narragansett king was poisoning the minds of all the Nipnets? The Indian murders at Brookfield,

the destruction of Lancaster, the massacres at Mendon, Manchoag, and that of Deerfield—if it is true—all at about the same time, argue a wide-spread disaffection, and to cap the whole, what do you think of John's disappearance? of the wounded neck of Pompey, and the warning of the Hill Indians to our people? Do not these things look as if some great, mischievous design had been brewing; something worse than the mere venting of spite here and there by individual Indians or mere clans? John has said for a long time, that our neighbors, the Washakims, were preparing to dig up the hatchet, and who could be better authority than he who has hutted, hunted, and fished with them, as if he had been a born Indian. He knew all their habits and could overmatch the best of them at their own arts, and he seemed to read their thoughts under their facial lack of expression. I think, father, it is time we should all go, and God grant that those about the Castle left in good time."

"Well, Susan, I have said all along that mother and the girls should go; that they'd ought ter go, I mean, ter the folks in Marlborough, and I think so still. There's no talkin' to a woman, Sue, perticular to an edicated one. There's half yer words I don't quite understand, and the tother half runs so like a milltail, that ag'in I've got the fust idee straightened out, there's a dozen more all elbowin' their way inter my head, until the hull thing is snarled up wus'n the witch-knots in Jenny's mane. As for what has happened at the Castle, I believe it was all because the folks had no leader; none

ekal ter the 'mergency I mean, and they got demoralized. If Cap'n John or Eph Curtis had been there, them red devils would n't 'a smoked 'em out ser easy. They must er took 'em unawares. I've faith ter believe that no Injun ever fit face ter face if there was a chance ter run. I've sent a baker's dozen on 'em ter the'r last reckoning and I could never git one on 'em ter show more 'n three inches square of hisself till I went up ter see how the old rifle kerried, and ter find out jest where I hit 'em. I don't take skelps, but I never 'low an Injun ter kerry off his'n ef he squints at me over er log. I don't see any sense in mother an' the gals stayin' here. If anybody's got ter be killed, one's enough. Come, come! now gal, be good an' say ye'll go, an' mother an' Martha'll soon fall in with ye. They seem to think whatever yer do must be right. I can't for the life on me, see how you manage 'em. I set my foot down that I won't do a thing an' it's no use er talkin'; but they keep talkin' jest the same, an' by and by, when I git a leetle of the savage off, I go an' do it; can't help it. How you ken haul them critters into a line I don't see. I wish you would go, Sue. They'll mind what you say an' do. They did n't like John at fust; they said he was a city fop, and when I didn't make any fuss, they said I'd spile my darter if I let things go on, an' then they said he was half Injun; that some blue-eyed soldier had been too much about the wigwams. Martha went on ter say that he was a tyrant, and a pompous, overbearin' martinet. I don't know where she got so much quality English. That was a

trainin' day. Tham ar fellers got full and would n't fall into line, an' John locked 'em up in the guard house. But I noticed that when you got ready ter talk, they fell in love with John wus'n you did. If John was here ter tell 'em ter go now, they'd go, Digory or no Digory. I liked John, but I never said much in his favor 'afore. How mighty clever 'tis ter praise a man arter he's dead.

It don't cost anything then, not even condescension, as the parson says, and you need n't be afraid he'll come round the next day ter borrrer money on ye. There's many a man starved ter death ter-day for want of half the money it takes ter buy him a monerment ter-morrer. The man they mortalize ter day is giner'ly the feller they kicked off the doorstep yesterday. These women folks don't think I know anything lately, but John knew it all. If I didn't think he was the best man in the colony I'd er been jealous afore this. Poor John! I don't keer much fer the men giner'ly. They allers seemed ter think Digory was a hull arsenal of hisself, did n't never need any help; not even a soft word could they give me. The young men allers looked as if they thought I's a goin' ter bite 'em, an' the old men was perlite, but as cold as Jenerwary. They never offered to do anything for me. Didn't they think I never needed anything done? Could n't they see when you were all down with the measles, mother and all, that I needed help? Must a man cry like a woman ter make his sorrers known ter his neighbors? What's the use er bein' a man if ye've got ter act like a woman? I never held spite ag'in anybody

but an Injun, an' I would n't let him starve, nor suffer much, when he wan't in fi'tin' trim. If I meet a strange dorg I look ter see if he bellies out, an' if he don't, I know what's the matter. I give him half my dinner. S'pose I'd er waited fer the dog ter cry, er ter tell me what ailded him, what 'ud become 'er the dorg? Poor John! He come ter me an' cut my wood, an' did my chores fer me, an' let me nurse my sick ones, an' he wan't half grown then; an' you wan't nothin' to him then Sue, you had n't got out er short clothes. There wan't anything selfish 'bout that. Talk about yer Christian charity. 'Twas born in that ar feller. He did n't need religion; 't would be wastin' piety ter feed it ter him. Oh, my! what 'ud the planters say ter see old Digory wipin' his eyes? Oh, my! I must either cry or swear. I say, Sue, you must n't cry so. Mebbe John'll turn up yet. I'd tell you if I darst to, but I darsn't. I had a dream, but I don't b'lieve in dreams. I tell ye, Susan, he may turn up yet, stranger things have happened. An' even if he don't, it's sunthin' to have such a man solid here, dead or alive, solid in the heart here. If I was a gal I'd rather feed my memory on such a man, and know that he was mine, than ter have any other livin' man on top er the turf. It's sunthin', Sue, to know yer had such a man, an' who knows but yer may have him agin. I darsn't say jest what I think, jest what I saw in my dream I mean. I don't b'lieve in dreams. But s'pose he's dead. Somehow I think the dead ones still walk with us through life, an' when we do right they smile on

us, an' when we do wrong they chide us. Their language is mighty onsartin, but sometimes I think I kin tell it. I darsn't tell you what I saw in my dream, Sue. It might lift you up, an' the fall 'ud be turrible. I ain't no b'liever in ghosts, Sue; I don't b'lieve that story of the graves openin' when Pilate killed the good man of Nazareth, that we see in the picter', an' I ain't no Christian. I ain't good enough; an' I don't quite swaller the redemption business. 'Pears like it was wasted trouble; but I do b'lieve in a hereafter,—conscious I b'lieve they call it; I know sunthin' 'bout that, I ken somehow sense it; ken see it without lookin', an' feel it without touchin'; an' all the little I know, I know by these senses, an' if I see, an' hear, an' feel a thing, I say it is so, if I am me.

"Your mother is dear to me, Sue; but Martha's mother never leaves her side, 'less I'm mistaken. I see her in my dreams, an' I see her when I'm awake. If I try ter see her I can't; I can't make up her pictur clear. It's blurred, unsartin, unsatisfactory; but when it comes unbidden, asleep or awake, it is so like her I ken see the partin' of her hair, the pupils an' color of her eyes, can hear her voice an' feel her breath upon my cheek; I never think er doin' wrong but I feel a chill, as if a cold hand was laid on me, an' I stop short an' say: 'No yer don't, Digory;' but I ain't ghosty, an' I don't b'lieve in dreams.

"It's an awful thing ter hev one prop arter another drop out from under ye arter yer begin ter git old."

"There, that'll do, father. Don't talk about it any more. It pains me more than all to see you struggle so with sorrow. You men don't cry like women; you seem to writhe as if in an extremity of mental torture, as if some great battle were going on between the impulse and the will, as if the soul were in a mortal struggle with its earthly bonds. It is something so dreadful that between sympathy and fright I forget my own sorrow in the fearful contemplation of it. But why do you persist in saying John may yet be alive? Can there be room for hope?"

"None, except that may be he was taken prisoner, an' in that ar case I doubt if the wust Injuns dars't do more than hold him. The hull nation er Nipnets know him, an' while they fear him as a warrior, they respect him. They e'en-a-most worship him. An' these Injuns are turrible superstitious; they 'magine that some men are more than human; that they are links in the chain that connects the Great Spirit with us mortals. An' besides, wicked and treacherous as they may be, they are yet open to a sense of generosity in at least one direction.

"A great warrior allus commands their respect, even if he be an enemy. Them savages took Cap'n John ter be the greatest warrior livin'. Eph Curtis was allus a terror to 'em, but he had ter take a back seat fer John.

"He was dignified, but simple in his habits; bold, but yet as kind as a kitten. He bewildered them Injuns by his contradictions in character. He was an Injun puzzle.

"An' that ar old squaw: I think she's half sister ter

the devil, but she liked John; allus called him her boy; an' I tell ye if she says no, there ain't an Injun short o' forty mile dars't go contr'y. But we was talkin' 'bout leavin'; what do you say to 't? Will yer go?"

"By all means. But how can we go except under your escort?"

"I forgot that, gal. Well, I'll be ready ag'in Thursday. Tell the women folks ter klect their fixins. Martha'll want ter p'rade when she gits ter Marlborough. But mind ye, I won't promise ter stay. I don't fear them critters, but women don't make good Injun fighters."

And kissing his pretty daughter, first on one cheek and then on the other, and with his horny hand under her chin, turning up her tearful face to his, he said:

"I doubt me if John is dead, Sue, arter all. Or if he is what men call dead, he still lives. Queer, ain't it, for such an old infidel as I am ter say it? I don't ree'ly b'lieve he's dead, but I don't b'lieve in dreams."

And so Susan and the rough old pioneer parted. Susan to tell of the happy decision, Digory to fulfill his promise.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DELIVERANCE.

THE work of destruction, so far as was known to the Northmen, was now complete, and the allies, having glutted their appetite for rapine, and despairing of further slaughter in that particular locality, gave little heed to the probability of outstanding domiciles. They heard of Packachoag and of Sagatabscot, but presumably the resident families were with the retreating party, in which case all that could be hoped for was a bootless bonfire.

But there was one being in Washakim war paint who knew to the contrary, and no one short of a practiced detective would have even guessed, while he held his tongue, that he was not born to the woods. To be sure there was the slightest indication to a wave in his jet black hair, but there were other young warriors of mixed race. The noticeable feature, if there was any such, was that the blue eye had not the dull brownish cast of the half breed. That young warrior, now within the forests of Washakim, whither Tehuanto and his fighting men had retired after wiping out the settlement, was urging his chief to send a band to Sagatabscot to put Sergeant out of harm's way.

The Washakim chief had already been instigated and

aided to insure the quiescence of two important persons, and that should have made it easy to effect his long kept purpose to destroy another. But the prompter was alien to the soil and that fact kept constantly alive in the mind of the chief a suspicion of duplicity, of lurking treachery. And again, he was superstitious. He dreaded the effect of what he had already accomplished; not for any aversion to bloodshed, but suppose Philip should, upon the ground of some treaty-making with the whites, or other pretext, withdraw, and the allies from the Ontario country should tire of an expedition that rewarded them with neither cloth nor scalps—the only two things, in their estimation, worthy of so much painstaking and actual loss in numbers—and should double on the in trail?

And had not the old squaw, whose footstep was in every wigwam, whose right of presence was everywhere recognized, and whose powers of divination and ability to accomplish ends by means unnatural were everywhere acknowledged, had she not pointed at him with her withered fingers, and hissed between her scraggy teeth—"Beware?"

To the frequent, earnest solicitations of the pseudo Indian, the chief demurred, and at last flatly refused to comply. But, as if in no way desirous of hindering the deed, could he escape the responsibility, he suggested that the Northmen, still at Tehassit, were drunk with fire-water and thirsting for blood, and might be in humor to aid him in his designs.

The Washakim furnished him three warriors to act as

sponsors for the good faith of the stranger, and with these he set out for the Northmen's camp, and at midnight was in the council at Tehassit, declaring the unprotected condition of Sergeant, and bargaining with the Ontario chief for the person of a woman from among the captives they might take, when the prisoners should arrive at the shores of Ontario. Once at home in the great northern forests, the chief should give him guides and a safe passport, with or without his prize, as he saw fit to keep or abandon her, to the lowest bend in the Merrimac.

A detail of four hundred warriors was ordered out. A tithe of the number was more than the stranger asked for, but the whole camp was in the condition of beastly debauch, revelling in the rum they had secured at the burned plantation, and the chief relied upon a twelve mile march to bring the men down to sobriety, but when such as could stand at all were fairly on their feet, it was wisely determined to defer the expedition until the following morning, as they were already quarrelsome, and once out from under the chief's immediate supervision their petty differences might lead to serious results.

That night the casks of rum that had been dragged by the Indians on a two-wheeled cart from the settlement, were put under a strong guard, but the disappointed warriors were appeased by the promise of a war dance upon the next night following.

The promise of a war dance was an implied promise of license with the casks.

Scarcely had the three Washakim warriors, in com-

pany with the alien, left the Twin Lakes, when Tehuanto half repented of not having taken part in the proposed expedition. His active mind and body, and his innate love of adventure, that had been stirred to effervescence by the scenes of the last few hours, conspired to produce that mental intoxication, the usual accompaniment of successful exit from thrilling scenes, and he so burned for its continuance that a few hours of the monotony of camp life racked him with the pangs of ennui. Calling together his warriors he ordered them to again prepare for the war-path, and in a brief hour he had passed the swift waters of the Upper Quinnapoxit and was gaining the summit of Malden Hill, a league north of the burned settlement, on his way to Tehassit, having left in camp a guard of warriors, most of them past the prime of life and unequal to a hurried march, and some of them suffering from wounds.

Beyond Malden Hill they followed the valley to, and over, the hill known as Stone House, a rugged, rocky eminence and precipice, and were soon in the lodge of the Tehassits, outside of which and along the Tehassit Brook lay the scattered line of Northmen, stretched in every conceivable attitude of rest or indolence, and buried in the loathsome stupor of alcoholic paralysis. Only the chief and a dozen warriors had abstained, and they had already been compelled to relieve the besotted guard at the rum casks. The Washakim warriors were either less inclined to its free use from having a more intimate knowledge of its effects, or were in dread of kindling the

ire of Tehuanto, whose word was law, and whose tomahawk was its sudden and ruthless executor.

Half the night was passed in council. Tehuanto urged that twenty warriors was an ample force with which to attempt the dislodgment of Sergeant and the capture of the women. To beset him with a larger body would savor of cowardice. He, for one, would hang his head in shame to summon the sturdy old white warrior to surrender to a force exceeding a score. He knew old Digory. He was a great warrior; a warrior who had a dozen Indian scalps hung up in the spirit land, although he never took one. A brave man was old Digory. He would like his scalp, but he must take it in true warrior style, either when he was asleep, or in something like equal combat. If twenty warriors could not take Digory's scalp, more ought not to.

The decision was, however, adverse to the Washakim's pleading, and four hundred men must go on the errand, while the spurious Indian would act as their guide. The four hundred must go, because that number needed the exercise to work off the effects of the debauch and prepare them for the promised next night's carousal,—the war dance. The Northmen had come a long path and had no booty to carry back; nothing save a dozen or two of scalps taken at Brookfield and Lancaster. A meagre compensation for a whole moon of filing over pathless mountains, and through tangled swamps. They must at least make the most of what enjoyment was attainable within the twenty hours or more before they took the trail to Canada.

So said the Ontario chief, and Tehuanto decided to merely accompany them but to take no active part. The mock Indian was to guide the party to Sagatabscot, and was to direct in the disposition to be made of the captives until such time as all were back again in Tehassit and again under the guidance of the northern chief.

And while the party are doing the bidding of their unscrupulous guide and director, we will pass over to the Twin Lakes.

The Washakim warriors, all their best fighting men, had accompanied the leaderless, unorganized band that had been collected by King Philip's agents, acting under his general orders, the immediate purpose of which was not real war, but a feint to try the temper of the allies and to involve them in an inextricable mesh of mischief done the whites, that should render peace thereafter next to impossible. And so far his scheme seemed to have thriven, to meet his most sanguine expectations or hopes. Actual war; merciless war; war to the knife; such as Philip had determined upon as an ultimatum; a war of extermination that was to admit of no parley, no capitulation, no possible peace, was yet sleeping in embryo, and what had already been done,—the ruin and slaughter at Springfield, at Deerfield, Mendon, Brookfield, Lancaster, and the plantation of Quinsigamond, was like the purposeless movement of incipient life. Philip had but touched here and there a key; had run the gamut to find if the instrument was in tune. It mattered little to him whether

these settlements were in or out of existence at present; it mattered much to him whether the whole Nipnet nation would or would not commit the unpardonable sin of breaking a truce without due notice. If they could be brought to do it at his instigation, they were sealed to him and his purposes past all redemption, and when the final trial of strength should come they need give no quarter for they could expect none.

Nor had the Nipnets alone been entrapped by the great sachem. The Pequots in a measure, enough to bind the tribe, the Nashuas, the Penobscots, and tribes from as far north as Canada, had sent squads sufficient to implicate the several of petty clans, while the warlike Mohawks sent declarations of hostility in favor of Philip directly to the whites, and some of them were present at all the recently committed atrocities.

Nothing now remained for Philip but to let what had already been done rankle in the bosoms of the enemy until, in their indignation, they should attempt retaliation; and this they were likely to undertake by separating their forces and sending detachments to the nests of such tribes as had broken faith. And in all the country there were but three or four correct examples. Prominent among those who failed to respond to the great chief's summons were the Pegans on the south, the Packachoags and the Quinsigamonds, and for their treason.—for it deserves no softer name when men desert their kind in race and blood to give aid and comfort to a hostile stranger, whether the delinquent be called Sagamore John

of Packachoag, or Uncas of the lower Thames; for their treason they were already billeted by the red king for the spirit land, when time and circumstances should ripen his scheme for execution. And the Wigwam Hill Indians, as being first to break the bond of confederation, must lead the way. It mattered not that they had been feted and feasted and pampered by the other race. They were parting with their birthright for pottage, and selling a nation for the song of a siren. Hoorawannonit, Uncas, and Arnold, are synonymous for treason, while Philip and Squanto were the 'Tells and Douglass' of barbarism.¹

But Philip was too wary, too politic to appear even to observe, at present, their disaffection to his cause. He would not hint at displeasure while an Indian with cause might make an enemy to fight. He made no such mistakes.

Let us turn back to look over and about the Twin Lakes and see what the squaws and warriors Tehuanto left at Washakim were doing at this time.

In the forest at the south end of the west lake the curling smoke above the tree tops indicated wigwam fires beneath. There were thirty birch tents—only thirty, for the tribe lived in families, cliques or little neighborhoods,

¹If ever a hero were deserving of an enduring monument to his memory, that man is King Philip of Mount Hope, for however valid Boston's plea for inciting homicide in self-defense, she owes it to the grandest type of patriot heroism in the annals of aboriginal America.

mostly on the borders of the two lakes but separated as fancied convenience, taste or inclination might induce them to adopt locations.

In this settlement at the south end of the west lake the squaws seemed occupied, some attending papooses, some carrying water from the lake, and some were bending over a fire where green spits were placed in the ground so as to lean over beds of hot coals. They were evidently broiling fish and preparing a meal, for on the ends of the spits were trout, dangling, and some still alive, or dripping their savory fat in sputtering drops upon the fervent coals.

Lounging about on blankets, skins, and on the bare ground were warriors,—warriors of fifty years, some more, some less, and all, excepting a few wounded, were still, in a degree, able bodied men.

And there were boys there; boys of six years, up to sixteen, with bows and arrows, and fishing tackle, as spears of sharpened bone, bone hooks and sinew lines, nooses made of sinews and attached to poles were scattered over the ground as they had been dropped by boys fatigued with play, or by some tired fisherman.

But those lolling Indians. Look at them! Nothing in nature can exceed in pure expression of absolute laziness the Indian warrior off duty and at rest. The same, always and everywhere, from the Aroostook to the Rockies. Sleep is nothing to it. Good, sound sleep has an air of business about it. It is a process of recuperation; a cause in the active development of an effect; a

quiescence with a purpose. But the American savage at rest is an incarnate yawn; a type of the utter disuse of every faculty but that of drawing breath, and even that he would gladly omit if it cost him an effort. He can't even afford to dream, as he lies there upon the flat of his back, under an unobstructed broiling sunlight, with mouth wide open, where flies and grasshoppers undisturbed may congregate and hold high revel. But like his wary neighbor, the fox, every sense, though in no way alert, is so intensely acute that no sound that even a hunted squirrel might detect fails of instant recognition by the ear, and with the slightest real occasion for activity he springs to his feet with the agility of a wild cat, all nerve, all action, all intensity.

But the occasion for activity was wanting, or so completely masked that no sound nor token was distinguishable. And yet, while twenty warriors, scarcely out of their prime, lay indolently whiling the hours away, five pairs of sharp, black eyes glared upon them from within half a bow shot distance, and five hatchets only waited discovery to dart like teased rattlesnakes upon their unsuspecting prey.

Once or twice the boys started up, half erect, listened a moment, and relapsed, in imitation of their elders, into sleep again. All was in the most perfect hush of silence. The squaws even, satisfied that the fish were doing well, lost themselves in a dreamy stupor.

But one thing only seemed alive, and that not half so. The old squaw sorceress of Quinsigamond was there,

leaning with her back against a chestnut, motionless as seemed the earth she stood upon, saving that her dark, wild eyes rolled restless in their sockets, peering into the hazel thicket close at hand upon the west.

Something in the rear of the wigwams, a shapeless mass of brownish yellow, scarcely distinguishable from the dead wire grass upon which it lay, something movable and moving, leaves the thicket, and by some undiscernible impulse, some occult power of locomotion, makes its way snail-like toward the great birch tent, the nearest wigwam in the circle. The old squaw's eye is upon it, glaring with all the pent up fury of a disturbed rattler; watching it with feline intensity; yet not a muscle of her wrinkled, withered old face, not a movement of her rigid form gives token of interest. It is simply statuary venom sculptured in breathing inertia. It almost takes one's breath away to see this bunch of dried grass at her feet, and upon which her glistening eyes are bent and staring, take on such dubious phases of animation, where all the semblance of life lies in the fact that it is now two feet nearer the wigwam than it was two minutes ago.

And now that we, being in the instance out of the visible form, may move in the muffled footsteps of imagination without arousing the supine braves, let us glide to the rear where we may observe, unobserved, the thing that moves without limbs, that stirs without life. Is she really a witch, this crooked, old, red beldam in the deer-skin smock, naked limbs and moccasined feet? Is she so far mistress of occultism that she can at will displace

realities and substitute a compound of the invisible essences of things in semblance of material actualities? Witch, conjurer or devil—she not only seems to impart life to the inanimate but to guide its movements, and that without word, sign or token.

The mass, still shapless, is now half erect, and by some unseen movement or device has opened a long gash in the birch wall of the tent, and through the aperture has vanished—not vanished—only half of its bulk has passed into nothingness, or through the slit, while half remains outside, a thin, flat sheet of sunbrowned wire grass, so light the summer breeze might curvet with it in playful dalliance.

But hark! That yell! That unearthly screech, such as only a practiced Indian's throat can utter, and such as it utters only when all the sanguinary devilishness of his wild being is in the ascendant. And the whoop is echoed by a chorus of voices which, to the ears of a lounging warrior, means nothing less than scalps. It served to string every fibre of the loungers' systems, and with a bound every brave, with ready tomahawk, stands upon the defensive.

Toward the lake is, or was, an open flat of green-sward, no place for concealment, no possibility of an ambush, and there by the lake shore stood a trio of warriors in Quinsigamond war paint and wampum; stood brandishing their tomahawks, and by their gestures daring the veterans to come out of camp.

With a certainty that all was as it seemed, it would

have required no second summons from a trio of madmen to call the Washakims out, but as it was, they had no intention of hazarding what might prove an unequal assault, to punish an insult. They were too cautious; something more serious than whoops, menaces or defiance must be offered to induce an action, but they moved down to reconnoitre. The ruse had answered the object of the design. The Washakims had halved the space between the tents and where the strangers stood when another peal from one of those rawhide throats broke out in the very heart of the camp and set the squaws and children, all but the old squaw, flying like frightened partridges, each for a hiding in some thicket.

Has she, the old squaw, wrought a miracle? or how came three warriors, one of them a white man, stepping through the slit in the wigwam?

The now cut cords of rawhide have brought blood to the wrists since last they drew rein on Pompey, and one chief's face will make old Wigwan burn with delight—if it ever gets there.

As the last menace, the war whoop from the camp, broke upon the startled ears of the little garrison it seemed more like real business, and the warriors caught at the idea that they were ambuscaded. No time was to be lost in making their way back to the circle of wigwams, where they might better act on the defensive.

But all is quiet again; no sight, no sound of an enemy in or about the lodge. If any have been there neither

squaws nor children have seen them. They heard the whoop—they ran and hid—no more.

Wonder began now to displace a warrior's usual impulses and anticipations. Even the three strangers by the lake were gone, up, or down, no one knew whither, no one had seen them cross the lawn. They had disappeared as mysteriously as they came. The Washakims could look far into the forest except in the line of the hazel thicket, but they were not there. That had been probed. No soul was in sight except the old sorceress. She stood leaning against a chestnut tree fast asleep; and deeper became the mystery when one warrior espied the bunch of dried grass curiously plaited. It was merely grass without shape or form and with nothing to indicate a use or design, and yet it had a meaning,—it had been subjected to the manipulations of art. But now it is all out clear as daylight,—the slit in the tent wall, the cut thongs, the vacant wigwam. Two prisoners have escaped. A white man and a red, and they the two greatest warriors in all the Nipnet country. Two doughty chiefs as ever threw a tomahawk or cast an eye along an iron barrel are free to contrive and execute vengeance upon Washakim. You may hunt for them but you will never find them.

The old squaw sleeps on through all your vexation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE COUNCIL AT SAGATABSCOT.

IN the settlement of Marlborough great indignation was expressed at the obduracy of Sergeant in remaining with his family at the plantation in spite of the many warnings and heedless of the terrible danger that encompassed them. Marlborough people said it was worse than foolhardiness; said it was a vain attempt to vaunt his courage; that his declared determination to remain was an inexcusable piece of bombast, unworthy of a man of his acknowledged sense, and without delay they called an indignation meeting at which, after a hasty consideration, it was decided to send a detachment of soldiers to Sergeant's house and bring himself and family to Marlborough whether he would or no.

The pastor, Meekman, on whose motion the vote had been taken to perform what was at best a disagreeable task, not to say a dangerous one, now the Indians were in full possession, volunteered to place himself in the ranks as one of the twelve men to perform the duty, and as the remaining eleven positions were quickly filled, the list being headed by Ephraim Curtis and Jim Pyke, a choice of commanding officer was in order, and by a vote of the squad Curtis was named.

The following day, Thursday, was fixed upon to put the scheme in execution, to remove the family, and to place Sergent under arrest should he prove in any sort contumacious. They should not have waited for the morrow, but the way was unbeaten and blind, and an ambush was believed to be imminent.

It was Wednesday, the day of the meeting in Marlborough, that a party of seven warriors set out from the south border of Washakim forests, where the Quinnapoxit (now the Nashua River) skirts the upper intervale.

Five of this party were the picked men of the tribe of Quinsigamond and had been from Wigwam Hill on duty as scouts for a fortnight, subsisting upon raw flesh, roots, and such low growing berries as ripen in the later spring months. But they were accustomed to spare diet and uncooked food when circumstances made it hazardous to induce a column of smoke, and could readily abstain altogether from food or other nourishment than water, if need be, for a week at a time, with no visible effect upon their constitutions, so much does discreet practice of privation inure one to endurance.

The sixth one of the party, as is already surmised, was the chief, Wandee, while the seventh was a painted warrior, fully armed and accoutred as an Indian except that he carried a rifle and left the trail of a white man.

The one thing belonging to an Indian that a white man could never fairly counterfeit was his trail. He might learn to take fifty consecutive steps in true aborigi-

nal form, and the fifty-first would betray the pseudo savage. When he stood he looked the Indian, saving perhaps he was too erect. A perpendicular line from the top of any Indian's head would fall outside and in front of his body, and this peculiarity is still more noticeable in the lope, the Indian's favorite mode of locomotion, for where a white man leans forward, the savage crouches, runs low down. Again, his shoulders are rarely if ever square, nor well set back, giving prominence to the chest, for, however well made up, his whole appearance is slouchy. Lastly, for a difference in this case, the eyes were off color.

We first saw this party rising Malden Hill. Having left the Quinnapoxit River they crossed its tributary, Tide Brook, over Winter Hill, and down the divide between Winter and Stonehouse Hill to the junction of the streams Beaver and Tehassit (now Tatnuck Brook), fording the Packachoag or Half Way River, passing under the hill, by the river to its junction with the Bimelick, and crossing to Sagatabscot Hill.

This long, circuitous route was chosen by advice of the scouts, who had learned through a strolling Indian that an immense cordon of Indians were closing in upon Wigwam Hill, having been posted that morning by the Ontario chief at the request of Tehuanto, who saw his opportunity to crush the hated Quinsigamonds by sheer force of numbers.

The line of pickets posted this Wednesday numbered two hundred, and was, on the following Friday, aug-

mented by the four hundred who had been detailed to capture or kill Sergent and family in the meantime. The line extended from the north end of the lake to Weasel Brook, thence south four miles to the Packachoag, under the brow of the hill. By the route the seven scouts and fugitives had taken they had crossed an immense trail and had heard in the distance sounds of hilarity, a thing unusual and unaccountable, as the Hill Indians had no conception as to the cause. The trail was evidently made by mixed Indians, as was seen at many points by the difference in stride. The Northmen stepped short, straggled, and altogether made an awkward path, if that can be called a path where the footsteps cross and wriggle from side to side, much as a herd of strange cattle would do, and altogether unlike homing kine. Most of the steps differed entirely from the sweeping stride of the Nipnets and their southern neighbors the Narragansetts and Pequods.

Passing the summit of Sagatabscot Hill the seven came upon a log house, half fort, half domicile, and in front of it Digory Sergent at work mending an ox yoke which he must use on the morrow in hauling his family and effects to Marlborough, for it was beyond his knowledge that all customary egress from his clearing had been effectually cut off.

The surprise, not to say consternation, that fell upon one of the party as he heard from Sergent the fate (so far as he was able to judge) of the plantation, was clearly

visible under the paint of the blue eyed warrior, for even the scouts were not until now aware of it.

They knew of the cordon, and had suspected a siege, but not recognizing, from their stolen views, any familiar faces, they had thought it prudent not to reveal themselves merely to gratify curiosity. Strolling Indians had told them in the morning of the line of pickets, but had said nothing, perhaps knew nothing, of the burning of the settlement, and such ignorance was quite accountable from the fact that many of these native tramps often came from great distances, and frequently in nearly direct lines, following stars by night, and signs of bark and bough by day, collecting and dispensing news from tribe to tribe, and they were quite too wary to place themselves within the power of strange men, with strange paint and wampum, who spoke at best an unintelligible heathen gibberish.

The white man in war paint fixed his eyes upon the ground, bent his head and leaned upon his rifle, for a moment dumb and apparently confused, but the six Indians scarcely seemed to listen to Sergeant's tale of fact and surmises, or at most treated it with indifference, and yet not an Indian of them but would have fought to the death for that same plantation. Had they not for several of the last days hazarded life every hour, gone cold by night and hungry by day to secure the liberty of a planter and the planter's friend?

But they were Indians, and how could an Indian

harbor astonishment to a degree obvious in face or gesture?

By this time Wandee, whom the reader long since recognized, was seated with the scouts upon a log, listlessly gazing away into space; thinking, perhaps, but with no facial tokens of thought; sitting with that stolid, changeless look, where expression was ever absent, absent except in quick, desperate action, when ferocity beamed like lightning through a bank of clouds and passed as soon.

Digory, still oblivious to the fact that the pseudo Indian was other than a real red warrior in Quinsigamond war paint, and even failing, for some unaccountable reason, to recognize the chief sitting upon the log, was now beckoned by Captain John toward the door of the house.

This last act, at this time, with war first in his mind and last in his ears, was a trifle too great a strain upon Sergeant's hospitality. He had little dread of only a few Indians while his old musket was by his side, even although this one intruder carried a rifle, for the scouts had taken the precaution, partly at the old squaw's suggestion, to take one from the Hill, not even guessing approximately the purpose for which she had designed it.

It was all right with Digory so long as the Indians would keep together, and at a respectful distance from the house, but woe to the red-skin who should venture, uninvited, to pass the invisible bound, for there was a

limit to Digory's faith in Indians, and by a quick step he placed himself by the doorway and brought his musket, rifle, he called it, to a level with the captain's head, and so suggested a bar to progress. Barred out, the lord of the Castle Tavern that was, and lord of a sweet life that is behind the walls of Digory's Castle and by that barricaded door. But Sergent's act was well enough. It was his house, and the intruder was an Indian. Would Sergent fire? or would he shrink? He falls back astounded, amazed, scowling his fettered rage, for lo! the Angel of Sagatabscot, the little blue-eyed Susan has fallen forward and is sobbing aloud upon the brown bosom of the make-believe savage.

There are no eyes so penetrating as love. Suspicion and jealousy scrutinize, hate scowls contempt, looks askance,—but love leaps in at the eye—takes possession and occupies.

Digory Sergent was confounded, mortified; confounded by a sequel so unexpected—mortified at his own stupidity, for he now saw all, and realized his dull perception and his rude inhospitality. Dress, color, and every conceivable aid which Indian cunning and white man's art could devise and procure had all been pressed into service for safety's sake, but all together were but webs of gossamer, transparent as dew to the swiftly divining eye of love. And the joy of that love in the scene of restoration brooked no bounds. It was something weird, strange, even awful in its manifestations, as one may guess it will be when loving hearts meet there, over

beyond, in that border land. For to Susan, John I say was dead, and buried may be, may be left scalpless, a feast for wolves and foxes, or for that black scavenger of earth and air. John Wing, the captain, the might of whose fascination had absorbed the very soul of this belle of the plantation, was dead. Dead in every sense and conception; and young as she, the child widow was, she had even now looked to the beyond for the next meeting. And might not this then be that beyond? Could she trust her eyes to see him living whom she knew, or thought she knew, to be in that other life? She was startled at her own reflection; frightened at the thought that this sweet scene might prove a blank hallucination. She unclasped his form and sallied back, filled with something akin to dread. Started back and stared, half chiding herself for the presumption that dared to fondle with an apparition. But no. It was no dream, no cruel phantom dallying with desire, and she might give full rein to rapture.

Digory, for his incivility made ample amends, as virile natures make amends. He shook hands with the captain, clapped him on the shoulder, chuckled over his own purblindness, and charged his faulty vision to the want of his spectacles. That was plenty between two men, however much they love or can love their own sex. A Yankee is no Gaul, to embrace and kiss his man. He reserves such excess of tenderness for more appropriate objects.

Between Sergent and the captain the purpose of the

settlers in so abruptly abandoning the settlement, if indeed they were not murdered there, with the immediate causes which led to the determination, were, of course, only matters of conjecture. That seventy or more able bodied men should have succumbed, even to two or three hundred heathens, was, to old Digory, inconceivable, but to the captain—the Hill Indians' warning, as related by Sergeant, coupled with discoveries by the divining eye of Wandee, who had pronounced the great trail seen in the morning as made chiefly by the short men of the north, gave the clue not only to the hasty abandonment and the burning of the settlement, but also to whom the six mile line of pickets was indebted for its numbers.

To what extent the settlers escaped harm in the catastrophe was as much an enigma to Sergeant as to his guest, for not an Indian, not even a friendly Packachoag, had cast his shadow on Digory's clearing since the fatal night.

It had probably been deemed prudent by Sagamore John to effect neutrality, and however much the old chief, who had been a leader in preaching of the new dispensation, might have been horrified at practicing ordinary deception, he had been no inapt pupil in border politics and understood the saving limits of diplomacy.

That which most of all puzzled Sergeant and the captain, and for a moment seemed to interest Wandee sufficiently to make him half turn his head towards the speakers, for he had been an attentive listener to the terms of the conference, was the fact that not a Hill

Indian had been on Sagatabscot, notwithstanding that they must have known that Sergent had remained, as not a squirrel could bark but a Hill Indian or a praying Packachoag would hear it.

"What can be the reason, Sergent, that the Hill Indians have neglected to notify you of what has happened? They knew just how you were situated. The planters would tell them, for more than one Quinsigamond has taken a run to Marlborough before this."

"Possibly, John, none of the Hill Indians have been to Marlborough. Or it is among the possibilities that the planters themselves never left their homes alive."

"What do you mean Sergent?"

"Simply that we are absolutely in the dark. They may have been scalped in their beds. I despair of ever guessing right again about anything out of gunshot of this clearing or mine."

"And I am as much at sea as you. Wandee, can the Hill Indians have dug up the hatchet? Can they, after all, have sided with Philip?"

"Hill Injun no dig up hatchet, you guess," said Wandee, without turning, his sight still bent skyward. "King's men got ear; king's men got eye. Big heap woods down Quinsig. King's men watch. Hill Injun stay home. Him no big fool. Come long way roun', you guess."

"Well, if that is the case," said the captain, "the woods full of Indians, you and I and the five scouts stand a poor chance of getting to the Hill at present."

"No so sure. No very bad. Sky all cloud; see! No moon now, watch two t'ree in place. King's men bad watch. Canadaw men, heap long way up. Do' know woods, do' know lake. Cap'n got good ear, hear 'em; scouts got tomahawk, git 'em scalp. Do' know, mebbe."

"Well, Wandee, I'm a private. This is your march. I can risk scalping if you can."

"Me no git scalped. Me got top side. Me know Injun dar; him not know me dar. Me got top side, me keep 'em. Cap'n t'row 'way boots, get moccasin. Dig. got 'um."

"Yes, John, the Injun's right, I've got a dozen pairs of 'em. I take my scalps from t' other end. I never miss a good pair of moccasins when I shoot an Injun."

At this last remark of Sergeant's the Indians never moved a muscle; no witness would have supposed by any obvious recognition on their part that they either heard or heeded it, except, perhaps, as their glances met a suppressed smile which played for a second about the six grim faces. They knew Digory's record, and so long as he respected Quinsigamond scalps, the more he took from either end of an enemy the better they were suited. Digory was a great warrior, and as such they paid him deference in no stinted measure.

It was now nightfall, and when the darkness fairly settled, they must lose no time in moving on, for with Wigwam Hill their objective point, and that four miles away through an unbroken pathway beset, perhaps, by little bands of a watchful enemy, their movements would

necessarily be slow, and morning, to them, might come too soon.

Sergeant's time for departure had been fixed at ten o'clock the following day, and his proposed route was to pass the south end of the lake, leaving Hassinomissitt on the right. Much of their route would be through a heavy spoonwood and hackmatack thicket, and was little likely to engage the watchful attention of the Northmen.

Digory's first idea had been to pass by the old, wide trail leading over the hills and direct to Marlborough, but a little reflection satisfied him of its danger, and had reduced his plan from moving with wheels, to back-loading his cattle and beating a path.

Upon consultation it was arranged that the captain should be in waiting with an escort of Indians, below the lake, at noon, and for an hour they would all proceed in company.

Wandee, who had apparently been engrossed in a cloud study, now interrupted the conversation.

"Dig leave ox home. Can't eat 'em. First know, beller. Beller here, all good. Beller mile off, Injun all 'roun'. Dig take squaw, take pappoose, take squaw gal. Take no t'ings. Keep hark, go low. Go fo' mile. Den head up—march. No want cap'n; cap'n no good; Injun all roun'. No see five, see six. Too much gib. Dig's scalp 'nuff. Cap'n meet 'em on road seven mile. Good! Big talk."

"What say you, Sergeant?" asked John; "shall we use

our own judgment or take advice of a man born to the woods?"

"A woodsman for woodcraft; I begin to doubt my judgment, John. Injun knows Injun."

"Ah! Dig know some t'ings. Dig old warrior. Dig meet Injun, meet t'ree, dem scout; meet t'irty, dem war party. Dig good for t'ree. Meet t'irty. Dig no good. Get 'em scalp. Cap'n John can't help 'em. One scalp 'nuff."

"The Injun's right, John; one scalp is enough—plenty."

"Ugh! Dig ole warrior. Dig take big heap scalp. Take 'em from todder end. Dig, me'n you count scalp. You kine scalp. Cap'n John want one, two, scalp."

"Yes, Wandee," answered Sergeant, "I came near forgetting the moccasins."

"Ugh! Dig leave ox?"

"Yes."

"Dig leave t'ings?"

"Yes."

"Dig tie up dog, gib all 'way; no good; bark wrong time."

"All right Wandee. Sorry to leave you, Bose; Injun says you talk too much."

The sun had set and the clouds were getting blacker and heavier every minute. Darkness came on so soon that a candle must needs be lighted to aid in making a selection from the pile of moccasins. One would guess they were taken at scalping time, for not a moccasin

but bore plain marks of a sometime copious flow of blood.

“Ugh! Dig ole warrior. Scalp got big bleed. Bal’ head scalp—mebbe got ha’r on todder side.”

It would be impossible to make a wild Indian laugh outright, but to say they are not susceptible to the force of humor would belie them. They are not a little greedy of the grimmer type, but are such complete masters of expression as to hold themselves habitually expressionless.

Wandee could not so far forget his manhood as to smile, but the idea of Digory’s scalps was amusing enough to set his tongue dizzy, to say the least. His last remark might not have been intended as a jest, but it certainly savored of one.

It was now dark, pitchy dark, and the Indians were already outside the little enclosure that Sergeant called his front yard, standing wide apart, each taking the wind as it rolled up from the valley on the west, in a steady blast, unobstructed in its course over the eight miles of space which intervened between Sagatabscot and the grand swelling ridge and dome of Asnebumskit in the northwest. The wind, however much broken by the woods, or deflected by hill and hollow, must be their only guide in the darkness; no other indication of course was recognizable, and whatever variations might be induced by mound or swale must be nicely calculated. This was practicable, as the Indians were familiar with the precise topography of the section which, by keeping in mind, the rate of progress might at any time correctly assure them

of their position. Nothing must now be amiss in the calculation, or who knows but they might walk into the very jaws of a hostile camp.

John and Susan have parted in good heart and confident of a speedy meeting at Marlborough, for certainly there could be but little to fear now.

Wandee was master of the situation, so far as the party's short flight was concerned, and he had assured Sergeant that once on the way, by the route proposed, their passage was comparatively safe, and the walk, only twenty-six miles, a feat scarce worth the reckoning.

The mother, Martha, and little Netty, had each in their way, as each thought decorous, taken their leave, and even the baby—for there was a new-comer to the house of Digory—had been passed by a kiss, through the formality of leave-taking.

Old Digory fumbled John's rifle, and looked it over by candle light, every now and then casting toward the captain's face a furtive, questioning glance, as much, if rightly interpreted, as to say, "I feel a little shaky—do you?" but he said nothing aloud then to indicate solicitude.

"Good night, boys," he said to Wandee and the scouts.

"Good t'ing, old Dig; tie up ox, tie up dog, march low fo' mile. All right."

"John," said Sergeant, hesitating a moment, and seeming in an effort to choke back some impediment to speech, "John, there's no use talkin'," and reaching out his hand to the captain's ready, open palm, "my sperits run

low ter-night. I can't brace up. It ain't because I'm so old—I'm only sixty past, and I ain't no coward, John; you all know that. I'm ashamed on't, John, but the fact on't is, John, somehow I can't quite face the music ter-night. Mebbe it's because I've got five lives on my hands. I don't keer a fo'pence ha-penny for my own, but, my God, John! here's mother and the children, and it's all my fault. I know it, and there's no use er talkin'. It's all my fault. I did wrong in not going away with them sooner. But how was I to know that half er Canada would be about our heels? I'm afraid it was wicked in me John. I wish I'd er made 'em go. Tham critters might er killed me, an' they'd er been welcome ter my scalp, if the women folks was on'y safe."

"Come, come, now, Sergeant, none of this. You acted upon your judgment of conditions; acted in good faith; what more could the best of us do? An error in judgment cannot be accounted sin, whatever it entails. Don't be so ready to accuse yourself. But they are moving; good night. To-morrow at noon, beyond the Nipnap; lower woods, seven miles. Luck goes with pluck. Good night!"

"Take the plantation ridge, John, it's safer than the hollers, and it gives ye the wind."

And with this parting injunction old Digory recrossed his threshold and Wandee and his party slid out into the night.

Good night, Digory! say we, we shall hear of you again—in history.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PARTY OF ARREST.

THE plantation ridge was reached after crossing the half mile of valley that divided it from Sagatabscot. Great caution was necessary where the Hassinomissitt trail ran between the hills and along the valley, for there Indians might be expected, waiting to intercept any scout sent out from Marlborough. Wandee led, and so noiselessly that the whip-poor-will started from the ground only when brushed by his muffled foot. The party had gained the ridge and were nearing the summit, when they veered to the right, and passing the clay banks moved directly east, entering the lake forest to the south of the narrows. Hitherto they seemed to have kept their file more by instinct than by aid of any physical faculties, for, to an eye and ear like the captain's no sight or sound was appreciable. Suddenly the white man felt the touch of a hand, from the advance, and the five scouts in his rear seemed to know by intuition that a halt was called. Wandee's quick ears had detected sounds like those produced by men in sleep; something like hard breathing; and, as he mutely directed his companions to wait, he passed on and could soon scent a dead fire. Could, by listening in such close proximity, count five. But were they

friends or foes? They might be Hill Indians, being so near, being less than two miles away, and perhaps over-spent with watching might be their excuse for such gross carelessness.

The Indian's art availed him in ascertaining the truth. A dry twig fell upon the sleepers, and in an instant they were awake and began to murmur. It might be an owl had lighted upon a rotting twig that yielded to its weight. The wind might have detached it from an overhanging bough. A coon might have been making its nocturnal round and tried the stick before trusting his weight upon it. Coons do that way. But owl, or wind, or coon, it was all the same. The startled sleepers' strange dialect, as they in an undertone discussed the matter, had given them away. They were the short warriors from the north. It would n't be Indian to attack them now. They must quiet down and sleep again.

Wandee reported to his party what had happened, and what he had learned. They had murmured in an idiom unknown to the Nipnet. They talked scarcely above a whisper, but the quick ear of the Indian, aided by the occasion of his own devising, found it strange to his vernacular. They growled,—might be at coon, or wind, or bird—and cuddling closer in their blankets, slept. And the Quinsigamonds wore up to Wigwam Hill that night, five good, green scalps, though not a sound was heard that would startle a fox, where they were harvested.

The fatigue of thirty miles of prowling necessitated rest, and with every care for their comfort that woman's

love and warrior's duty might bestow, they were fed to surfeit for their fasting, and lodged in bear skins until the day should break.

It has been said the morrow had been fixed upon by the people of Marlborough for the summary removal of the Sergeant family, and accordingly, at the earliest glimmer of the dawn a squad of twelve men, including the parson and Jim Pyke, with Ephraim Curtis at their head, took up the line of march, in Indian file, for Sagatabscot Hill, with a route laid out almost identical with the one contemplated by Sergeant. By the course they had adopted they were without a beaten trail and were compelled to make their way at great pains, crossing swamps covered with stunted, dead and dying cedars and hackmatack tangles, or hillsides nearly as impassable by reason of spoonwood jungles. But on the other hand they could hope for perfect immunity from hostile bands of savages.

At four of the clock, reckoned by the sun's place upon the day's dial, the house of Digory Sergeant was reached, at the end of a twelve hours' march, but as the little squad drew up in front of it, not a sound broke the awful stillness of the little clearing; not even the bark of a dog, not the lowing of a cow, not the purr of a cat. Some crows sat perched upon the tall chestnuts in front of the house, silent, watching may be; waiting expectant; but at the sight of intruders they flapped their reluctant wings and sailed slowly, noiselessly, disappointedly away. A speckled woodpecker did venture upon the

chestnut tree's trunk and peck for a moment, but what was that except something to make silence audible? to make stillness seem the more profound? to make the lack of sound appreciable? To the startled ear it would seem like the rattle of close at hand musketry,—so sharply it broke out of nothing upon the sense auricular. But she flew away and left no sound, no life. The door of the house was open. The axe was still sticking in the log as it was left by the last blow, and there upon the wood-pile were Digory's hat and coat. Aye! and on the chopping block were pipe and spectacles. Sergeant would be out in a minute. He had probably seen them coming and just stepped in to slick up a bit. It would be wanting in courtesy for the militia to enter uninvited, and much more so to storm his castle until after duly challenging a surrender. But the order of the Justice of the Peace was authority from the colony, and so up to Crown. The order must be obeyed, but it must be done with military precision.

"Digory Sergeant, I, Ephraim Curtis, in the name of the King of England, Ireland, Scotland and the Colonies, more especially the Colony of Massachusetts, command you to appear and peaceably deliver yourself into custody."

No answer came from within. No reply to the summons. Sergeant might be shaving. They would wait a moment. Curtis was becoming impatient; mistrustful, possibly, that something had gone wrong. Sergeant might have anticipated their movement and headed for Marl-

borough by some other route. He would not harbor a suspicion that was already forcing itself upon his mind, but being impatient, he shouted :

“Digory Sergeant, come to your door and listen to the reading of a warrant for your arrest and removal to a place of safety. Fail not at your peril !”

Nothing is heard but echo for response.

“There is something wrong here,” said Curtis to his men. There’s his hat and coat, and his pipe and spectacles. The door’s ajar, and I’m going in.” Saying which, he stepped forward and entered. Two seconds had not elapsed when he reappeared, walking backward, with open palm over his brow, staggering as he came; and when he turned, his face was livid as that of death itself.

What could have so overcome an old Indian fighter, a soldier? for young as he really was, he had seen as much service as any man in the colony. He had seen men fall and die about him. He had killed—red-men—and had twice been carried to the rear to save his scalp. Indeed an Indian wore a portion of it at his waistband, as a trophy, and also wore a bullet mark in his shoulder for his presumption. What could have so overcome Curtis?

Howeever much one may accustom one’s self to witnessing the horrible, until by his real or affected *sang-froid* his heart seems turned to stone, and his nerves to steel, yet his mind is ever susceptible to emotional shocks, as new and unlooked for terrors become suddenly apparent. Ephraim Curtis had been startled, and was for the moment bewildered, enfeebled, unmanned. His men,

fortified against surprise by this intimation of horrors, partly from curiosity, and partly from an instant resolution to accomplish what their leader in a moment of weakness seemed to shrink from, entered at the door. Digory Sergeant lay there with his scalp-lock gone, face down, across the broken breech and bent barrel of his rifle; dead upon his own floor. Great gouts of blood and bloody clots of long, black hair, were here and there upon the floor, upon the furniture, upon all about him. Tables, chairs, and other household articles lay scattered about, broken, twisted, split and splintered, and in a far corner, the house dog,—a black, undershot jawed, mongrel mastiff—lay dead, but with eyes still glaring, still blazing with the green fire of frenzied, canine fury, and in his locked and blood-streaked, frothing jaws, the throat and windpipe of a savage, who lay prone in death, stripped of his breech clout, stiff and stark upon the oaken floor, telling of a dormant ferocity that leaped to his master's aid with all its primitive wildness.

Sergeant's struggle with the red fiends must have been terrible. A wife and children were in his charge and keeping and he was especially accountable for them, since he had spurned the council and protection of his neighbors. Digory fought hard; fought manfully; paid the penalty of his temerity, and slept.

No member of the family was in or about the house, but shreds of women's clothing, unlocked flints and broken ramrods, gave intimation of a quadruple defense of the

Sagatabscot citadel. It was evident the family had been carried into captivity.

A hurried council resulted in a resolution to pursue the savages and their prisoners with all possible speed, for it was evident that the bloody work had been accomplished within the hour, and it was among the possibilities to overtake the perpetrators and effect a rescue. There was now no time even to bury Sergeant. They would close the door, that prowling wolf or waiting crow might be cheated of an ugly feast. Nothing could indeed do Sergeant harm, but his body must be preserved for decent burial, after they had done their best to shield the defenceless women from the untold horrors which otherwise awaited them.

Hastily overhauling their equipments, inspecting their pieces, and tightening their belts for rapid work, they struck the Indian off trail (but not without misgivings from what seemed the immensity of numbers) and started in Indian file upon a slow, swinging lope for Packachoag Hill toward which the trail seemed leading.

Quickly descending the western slope of Sagatabscot, crossing the valley and river, and making a diagonal ascent of Packachoag, they were within an hour at the log house so lately deserted by Gershom Rice and family.

They found the house not entirely tenantless, as a party of praying Indians had entered it but a moment before and were in temporary occupancy. They had halted for the purpose of cooking by the aid of the fire-place and what utensils of culinary use might be left,

the carcass of a coon they had just forced by hand and smoke, from the hollow of a tree. They intended to sup and then make their way as expeditiously as possible to Wigwam Hill to report the day's disaster, of which they had, in some way gained knowledge, that by some means (they had but vague ideas of what) the family might be rescued.

They, the Packachoags, were by no means a fighting people, but they were friendly to the whites, and seemed to think the Quinsigamonds were valorous enough for any undertaking in their friends' behalf. They were now ready to acquaint Curtis with every circumstance that had come to their knowledge. The retreating party, the Packachoags said, numbered several hundred, many of whom were from the North, while a few Nipnets, chiefly Washakims, who, however, took no active part, except as an escort for the women, accompanied them. They said the Washakims were led by a strange warrior, who must have come from a great distance, for his whole manner was unlike anything they had ever seen among the Indians. His face was scratched as if by the upper brush of thickets, which might be, as he always marched, instead of loping like an Indian with bent head, and he often tripped in tangles from toeing out.

These praying Indians had learned from a straggler or a stroller, that the Washakims, on their return to Tehassit, were to join in a line of pickets that was established the day before, to act in some way against the Hill Indians. That on their return one-half of the

Northmen would start at once for Ontario with the captives, while the other half remained to effect their purpose, whatever that might be, upon the Hill tribe.

The white men were now too far spent to continue the pursuit, even were it not the height of presumption to do so in the face of facts as presented by the Packachoags, and Curtis determined to quarter in the log house for the night.

The Packachoags, the sum of whose knowledge of the use of household utensils consisted in observation of the white women at work, as they themselves had hung around the back doors, for the dogs' morsel—where there was no dog—had swung out the crane and inserted a pot hook under the hamstrings of the coon, thus suspending it head downward by each leg, and swinging the crane back to its place had ignored andirons, poker, tongs and fire-slice, and stepping into the wide-mouthed chimney were arranging wood and kindling according to their ideas of domestic economy, while one Indian was industriously rubbing together two sticks which soon smoked at the point of ignition, and a rousing fire was the quick result. The carcass of the coon—with its pelt still on, and its entrails all in position as when on its last nocturnal round it disturbed the mother robin and stretched out its prehensile paw to retrieve the only remaining egg, while the hair, what remained, was crisping and curling, or passing up the chimney flue in smoke—was simmering and stewing, dripping its ammoniacal odorous fat upon the coals and rapidly scorching on the

outside until it reached the inviting hue of the chimney back, when one very hungry Indian, the self-constituted toast-master of the occasion, called out: "Done, Injun. Done, goot."

An Indian is always hungry, rarely feasts, and seldom sees food enough before him at any one time to produce a surfeit. Indians always eat when food is at hand, against the next day's chances. This carcass, which might have weighed eighteen pounds, was quartered, and the four aboriginal Christians fell at once to tearing the still bloody flesh with teeth and fingers, and having made a hasty dessert of the less fibrous portion, and pounded the bones into pomace to eat as dressing, were soon outside this tidbit of a roast.

Being in a manner not extravagant for an Indian, refreshed, and after giving audible thanks, a custom of invariable observance among the converts, one which usually consumed time in the ratio of two to one of eating—if white men were within hearing—these Indians who could at the same moment turn one eye to devotion and the other to theft, rising refreshed and happy as Indians can be after feeding upon only four pounds of flesh and bones each, commended the Marlborough soldiers to the kindly keeping of the Great Father of men, and slouched off into the night, with their moccasins pointed towards Wigwam hill.

Curtis and his men camped upon the floor that night, each wrapped in his blanket, and dreamed dreams of the living, but dreams so wide away from at least one reality,

that six hostile Indians¹ in the cellar of that same house, penned in by the soldiers who lay stretched upon the trap door, listened all night long to the threatful mutterings of that armed dozen who slept, and before the sun was an hour high walked away unmolested.

As the stars that had been gleaming in the leaden blue over the Hassinomissitt hills began to glimmer and go out one by one before the glowing, yellow sheen that slowly crept up from the horizon, Curtis and his file of soldiers raked open the ashes over that huge bed of coals, which, after the converts' leave-taking, had kept the smouldering back-log and fore-stick and that bushel of red hot coals alive since the Indians supped, and casting on a mass of brush wood, placed the contents of a small bag of corn meal in the great iron pot, added a quantity of water and a sprinkling of salt, placed the thick dough in a tin kitchen before the fire, and waited. This was the half hour for council. Would it be judicious to attack a party of several hundred Indians, if indeed they could be overhauled before reaching camp? That was the question.

"Decidedly no!" was the verdict of Curtis. "It would be presumptuous to the last degree. It would be sure death to every man of us to attack such a number of Indians, even in their sleep; Indians prepared for any

¹ Six Indians of the raiding party—not yet recovered from the effect of the last night's debauch—were confined in Rice's cellar by the white men who slept—unconscious of their presence—stretched over the trap in the floor.

emergency of hostilities,—to watch, to defend, to assault, and to cover retreat.”

He had yet to hear, and that soon, of an equally rash, but successful feat, and that accomplished by what he would term “only an Indian.”

But in this case the parson would fain proceed to “smite the enemies of God with the edge of the sword.” His blood was up; he was no coward, neither was he vain-glorious. He did nothing for self-exaltation, but everything in the fear of the Lord, whose mortal subject and living representative he for the hour was.

“And hath not the Lord said ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay?’ What can this text mean, but that vengeance taken on these heathen idolators will bring to this, the seed of Abraham, recompense?”

The parson’s whole physical, mental, and moral constitution thrilled, burned to execute judgment upon the enemies of God, regardless of personal consequences.

And Jim Pyke, the quiet, unobtrusive, peace-loving Jim Pyke; the conscientious delinquent in canonical requirements; conscientious by nature and early teaching, delinquent through habitual carelessness;—Jim Pyke was on his nerve this early A. M. He had a wife and children whom he loved, but his love was a generous passion, reaching out to that extent that it embraced all in whom love, as a sentiment or passion, was a welcome habitant. Digory Sergent’s “women folks” had many to love them. They were white, and therefore were capable of loving. But Jim Pyke believed in his heart that to like was the

highest phase of affection's development in an "Injun," and therefore Jim and the Injun could n't affiliate.

Said Jim, "sail inter that ar Injun camp like a wadge inter a log. Go fer the very heart on 't—save the women folks ef yer ken, an' if ye karn't, then kill as many er them ar critters as yer ken, and die happy."

But Curtis' authority, if not his counsel, prevailed. He believed in saving his ammunition for some better, future promise.

And so the file of soldiers that marched up to Packa-choag yesterday marched back again to-day and left the six hostile Indians, who had lain concealed in the cellar through the night, free to follow the trail of their comrades, unmolested.

CHAPTER XX.

MIDNIGHT ASSAULT.

EVENTS were being crowded into a narrow compass.

Within seventy hours the Castle had been attacked, the garrison had retreated upon Marlborough, and the plantation buildings had been laid in ashes. Sergeant had been persuaded to remove to Marlborough, Captain Wing and the Chief Wandee had been rescued from captivity; Tehuanto, the Washakim, had bargained with the Ontario chief to reduce the Hill tribe; Archer, the missing guest of the captain, in or out of the flesh, had more than once put in a mystical appearance, and disappeared as strangely and as soon. The line of siege to Wigwam had taken position. The captain and Wandee had visited Sergeant at his house; Sergeant had been scalped and his family taken captives, and Susan was practically the prisoner of Eugene Archer, in an Indian camp.

On the day fixed upon for Sergeant's retreat upon Marlborough, Captain Wing set out with the sun four hours high, having in view to cross the path of the family when nearest Hassinomissitt and accompanying them for a few miles, or until, having passed the pathless swamps and spoonwood thickets, they would be less in need of such assistance as he might be able to render. Having

crossed the lake at Wigwam, in a canoe, he worked his way down the glens and over swamps until he found himself at the point where the lower lake breaks away and flows with rapid run to the valley of the Nipnap.¹

He was assuredly in good time; certainly as early as would seem possible for Sergent to reach that point; but not a solitary footprint, not a sign of a trail was to be seen running to eastward. There was a trail, but the dews had fallen since it was made. It was a white man's trail; the trail of several such; and it ran with the sun. There were many evidences that no party of Indians ever made it. There was turning out in several ways to pass the same obstruction, no care for keeping file; straggling, as if each man would select his way, and where the trail was kept by file, it was all too wide.

What could have been the purpose of a few white men passing to westward, and in the face of overwhelming numbers of the enemy, was past comprehension. That they were very few was certain. An Indian could have numbered them by the variation of footprints in the tender sod of early summer, but to do that exceeds the skill of any but a born woodman. How should the captain be able to guess upon what errand these white men were sent, since all the happenings at Marlborough, and much of what had been done hereabouts, were in his mind a blank.

¹The Half-way River joins the Bimelick at Quinsigamond Village, and the Blackstone or Nipnap at Fisherville, nine miles south of the city of Worcester.

The day wore on. The night came on, and Sergeant with his charge made no appearance. Something was wrong. There was but one way to act. He must return at once to Wigwam, call out a force sufficient for offensive or defensive work, and proceed without delay to ascertain why Sergeant had delayed retreat.

The moon rose with the set of sun, and the moon was up two hours high when the birch canoe landed the nervous, anxious captain at the foot of Wigwam. A brief and sorry tale met him as he stepped on shore. A tale that made the blood at first recoil from the surface and roll back upon its intermittently palpitating source. A tale that seemed to choke the breath and chill the heart with horror; but a moment later the blood bounded flushing to the face, tingling to every extremity and indicating an already half-formed purpose, and a disposition to execute it. There is no specific for a suffering soul or body like a counter-irritant. A suddenly awakened spirit of revenge; a new conception of a dangerous hazard; a startling surprise; will in a moment, lull an ache or sear a wounded heart and start it on the way to convalescence.

Wandee met the captain at the water's edge.

"Cap'n, new t'ing. Heap bad, Cap'n."

"Speak out, Wandee. I am prepared. I half expected Sergeant had been besieged, or watched, or some such hindrance placed upon him, but speak out—what is it?"

"Cap'n shut ear. Say Wandee never tol' him. Cap'n

git mad. Cap'n swear. Feel all better. Den open ear."

"Oh, speak; out with it! What have you to say that my ears will shrink from hearing?"

"But Cap'n will. Cap'n swear; say dam heap bad Injun! Say cuss—say God. Call Great Spirit—'less Cap'n turn whiter 'n moon."

"Don't kill me with words, Wandee."

"Heap bad, Cap'n. Old Dig los' scalp."

"I feared as much. And the mother and daughters?"

"All gone. Injun got 'em off; gone long way. Kill pappoose up Tehassit. Prayin' Injun say all t'ings."

"What Indians did this? Where from? Where gone?"

"Cap'n lif' head, look up sky. Cap'n swear! Say heap dam' bad Injun! Cap'n no squaw; Cap'n swear, big swear—nen shut teeth."

"Go on, Wandee."

"Big lot Injun. Injun from col' country, way up; top ribber; top big lake. Injun go no funder; 'way up Ontary."

"Which way went they from Tehassit?"

"Go up 'Bumskit. Go home, Ontary. Some go Washakim."

"Were the Washakims with them?"

"'Bout hundrd—you guess. Strange Injun dar. Him look up sky all time. Him no look down same 's Injun. Him chief. Him toe out. No say—no talk all time."

"Could you make out his tribe?"

"Guess got no tribe. Mohawk, mebbe. Mebbe spirit—bad spirit. Do' know. Him no talk Ontary, no talk 'tall. Him witch; him devil; him no Injun. Injun no look up all time."

"Of course Tehuanto dare not keep the women, and so near his old prisoners."

"Tehuanto t'ink him got prisoners, up Twin Lake."

"Don't you suppose he knew of our escape?"

"How should? Wandee got fast foot. Up Washakim old mans. No run so quick. Tehuanto see Dig las' night. Dig los' scalp sun up tree high."

"Who brought the story?"

"Packachoag meetin' men. Him say all story. Packachoag steal. Packachoag no lie. Packachoag pray for meat; nen steal it. Packachoag tongue all true; say Injun have war dance up Tehassit, 'fore soon."

"When is the war dance?"

"Dis time, moon-up tree high. Meetin' men say story. Say Washakim go home, no take white squaw."

"Curse these red heathen! no sooner out of one mischance than they manage to bring on another. But if they get to Ontario with whole scalps they will do better than I think. That is, if they take those women."

"Goot 'nuf, Cap'n John! Big brave Cap'n! Cap'n git mad; swear some; hope some; feel better."

I will follow those Ontarios; will any Hill Indian volunteer to accompany me?"

"Cap'n say book words, no un'stan. Cap'n say go? say fight? Wandee go too. Go one, two days. Heap

Injun over hill yon. Big fight mebbe. Cap'n sleep, call Cap'n moon half up. Wandee call council. If go, go quick—like deer. Big talk—Injun tired."

"Well, I must wait, and rest while I can—sleep may be. May be my last sleep. No matter; it is do or die this time."

The programme, as contemplated, and privately arranged by Philip, including the destruction of various settlements near at hand, had so far been carried out to the end.

Nothing now remained to do for the present, or until the whites, goaded beyond endurance, should assume the offensive, a thing sure to happen, and as the Indians were at once to disperse, no way would be left for the enemy but to send out detachments of armed men to chastise the marauders, each tribe in or about its own lodge. And this was precisely what the great chief wanted, as it would materially weaken the defensive force in Boston and the large towns, and so, when by preconception the savages should concentrate upon this and that point, the effective force of the enemy remaining was unlikely to be competent for successful resistance.

So adroitly had the scheme been fashioned, and so successfully initiated, that it is more than likely, had it not been for the despicable treason of men of his own color and races,—who to curry favor for the cheap praise or miserable pittance the white man might bestow, betrayed him at several points—his great enemy would

have been effectually wiped from this part of the continent.

However terrible would have been such a result, and unfortunate for mankind at large, no fair-minded man can fail to sympathize with the great chief, surnamed the king, and to hold in abhorrence the red miscreant who slew him, at bullet range, from his hiding place. That the viper whom Philip had nursed, should, in fawning upon the white man, sting his friend and leader to the death.

The Indians now, by Philip's order, each made his way to his natal lodge, and Philip, who had been active only as the master spirit of design, retired to Mount Hope, there to remain until time was ripe to sound the call for completion of the work of devastation and death.

The reduction of the Hill Lodge was a private scheme of Tehuanto's, participated in by a portion of the Northmen, partly for the love of excitement, and partly as a compliment to the Washakim by the Ontario chief.

The Washakims must now go out upon the line which was to close in upon Wigwam Hill, ready to make attack when some propitious moment or circumstance should seem to invite it; for to make assault upon the fortified hill without some unusual advantage, even with five times the opposing numbers, would seem, to such as knew the force and temper of the Quinsigamonds, extremely hazardous.

The Ontarios, to the number of three hundred, had been in line for a day, as were a scattering few from

several of the Nipnet tribes, although the majority of such had but little stomach for the undertaking, as they had no private wrongs to redress.

The remainder of the Ontarios, about an equal number with those posted, were to move on the morrow for home, taking with them the white captives, and accompanied by Archer, who was still in war-paint, and as yet unrecognized by the Sergeants.

Like other people, the Indians must celebrate the consummation of their scheme, and to do this effectually they were as well prepared as ever Indians were, and their methods were the same the average white man adopts.

Alcohol must be the propulsive force by which they would be blown to the seventh heaven of hilarity. Their enemies, all within twenty miles, were dead, and their habitations smoking in ruins. The merits of the feud inaugurated by the Washakims against the Hill Indians, the Northmen knew little of, and they cared less, but their chief had promised and they would keep faith.

Rum, that glorious inspirator, the only gift of civilization an Indian could appreciate and really prize, was ample in quantity for the present, and nothing remained but to revel to their full content in one grand glorious war dance before bidding adieu to the Asnebumskits and the Washakims, and starting on their long, back trail for the wild borders of the great northern lake.

An Indian war dance has been variously described, but actually varies only in the minor details, all of which are

simply disgusting items of revelery, often rendered hideous by beastly intoxication, unmatched outside of civilized society, when alcohol is made the basis of unbridled riot. A word picture of beastliness is not necessary to my present purpose, and is certainly foreign to any tastes I have either inherited or acquired, and I pass the scene, merely stating that the Nipnets present, more wary, perhaps because more familiar with the stupefying and nauseous effects of immoderate indulgence, had been less greedy of the stimulant and were able at early morning to report themselves for duty, leaving the Ontarios to sleep off the effects of a deeper debauch.

It was nearly noon before the Northmen were in condition to commence their journey with the prisoners, among whom were the Sergeants and three women from Quaboag. Travelling in a northwesterly direction, staggering, straggling, romping and still revelling, they reached Asnebumskit Pond, where a portion, numbering perhaps one hundred, camped, being too far spent to proceed, while the remaining two hundred managed to march as far as Pine Hill, two miles away.

These last took to their blankets where the brook bends under the west brow of the hill, and utterly careless of surprise, since no enemy was within a day's march, abandoned themselves to sleep without even taking the precaution to post a guard.

And with the same recklessness of consequences, or rather sense of absolute safety, the band at Asnebumskit had been equally remiss in not providing against the

possibility of a night assault. But indeed the habit of posting a watch was almost universally ignored by the American savage, who trustfully relied upon the extreme sensitiveness of the ear, or perhaps upon that occult sense which detects a hostile presence without the aid of any of the natural faculties. Extreme watchfulness, even in sleep, is in their wild natures inherent, as in the lower animals. Like the wing-weary wild goose, peacefully sleeping on the forest shaded bosom of some lonely cove, motionless except the breeze shall drift him landward, when, with the backward stroke of a single foot, a stroke without thought, without intent, without conscious purpose, he regains his position and sleeps on.

The frogs may pipe, an owl may scream, the katydids dispute all night, he hears nothing, realizes nothing. But let a prowling fox steal near his liquid bower, never so noiselessly, never so softly,—and the air is full of motion. A burst, a flutter, a loud honk! and the little flock, just over the water, is sailing away for the broader bosom of the open lake. Watchfulness, in an Indian, is in no sense a method, as with white men.

Night had swallowed Asnebumskit and the Pines, and the moon, risen an hour later than sunset, cast at an hour before midnight a dense black shadow upon the western feet of the two hills where the drunken marauders lay encamped.

At this hour, just before midnight, two parties of twenty Indians each, armed with tomahawks and scalping knives (ordinary sheath knives), with here and there

a musket, or a brace of rusty pistols—such as from over-use or want of use and defacement had been discarded by the whites and sold to the Indians—might have been seen like flitting, indistinct, black shadows, swiftly moving over the ridge to the west of Stone House Hill.

One of these parties hurrying on in Indian file, is headed by a white man in whom we recognize Captain Wing, while the other is led by no less a warrior than the fierce red chief of Quinsigamond.

Wandee led, and was on a heavy trail which as yet required but little skill to follow, even in the semi-darkness, but as they approached Asnebumskit Lake, Wandee came to an abrupt halt, and beckoned to the white man to come nearer.

“Cap’n John, Injun split in two, in t’ree pieces. Go t’ree way, some go up hill—’bout twenty—no squaw—some go dis way, go for pond; some go nudder way—do’ know.”

“And how shall we do, Wandee?”

“Me know ’fore soon, you guess.”

And with that the Indian bent himself to the task of divining not only the reason for the division, but with which of the two companies the captives had gone. The third one, the party that had ascended the hill, had not taken them, as was evident, but to unravel the trail of the larger masses was no easy task, especially as the rustle of a bush, or the crackling of a twig under foot might betray the hunter and render the whole scheme abortive.

He started slowly and alone, crouching, feeling his way,

cat-like, carefully scrutinizing the left hand trail, but after a moment returned and reported.

“Big heap Injun go dis way. All sick. All lame. Too much fire-water. Got two squaws.”

And now he bent himself as assiduously to examine the trail that ran to the northward, by the east side of the hill. He was now absent a much longer time. So long that the white man became uneasy and paced stealthily with his cushioned feet up and down, peering now and then with eyes shaded by his hand from the glaring moonlight, into the thick of the forest where the chief had disappeared.

The Indians, meantime, seemed perfectly reconciled to the delay, and in no way anxious for their leader, or disturbed by his absence; but observing that the captain was too much concerned to be other than an alert watcher, each Indian stood himself up against a tree and slept, as restful, as quietly as he could have done in his own wigwam.

A full hour had elapsed and yet Wandee had not returned. Fifteen minutes later, and a dark shadow shot out from the cover of some birches apart from the trail, and stood as composedly, as calm and as free from fatigue apparently, as if he had passed the hour in sleep. But he had been to Pine Hill. Had traversed five miles of forest, half of it following a trail of which he could only catch glimpses as the dim light broke through the forest foliage, and had effectually reconnoitered the enemy's position.

"What has happened, Wandee? Why gone so long? Have you made out who and what was on the trail?" asked the captain, in a scarcely audible undertone.

"All goot, Cap'n. Goot t'ing, Injun all 'sleep. Got fo' squaw."

"You saw them, then?"

"See squaw, no see face. Do' know who she be. You squaw may be dis trail, may be zat trail. Do' know."

"But what shall we do? If we split we are too weak for either party. If we go together we may fall upon the wrong one."

"Me say split. Big heap warrior bot' way. No mind. All sleep, all sick, one wake so goot as two sleep. All sick, crawl to brook, drink. Heap drink, mo' dry as two fish."

"Very well; give me my squad, with the five scouts who cut us loose, and we will take the short trail. But how much time do you want to get back to the Pines? We must wait till then."

"Half time gone—so long. Cap'n know."

"Half the time it took you to follow the trail and return? Is that it?"

"You guess. All goot, Cap'n wait;" and with a wave of his tomahawk the twenty warriors of his squad fell in behind him and disappeared among the birch trees through which Wandee had returned.

The captain now selected a young warrior, one of the five scouts, an Indian who had guided the rescuing party at Washakim, and after waiting the prescribed half

hour, for Wandee's advance, the Indians fell behind the young warrior and started on the trail that led to the pond.

The trail had been followed at a slow pace but a few minutes when the new leader halted, and falling back beside the captain said in a low voice, "Injun here. No go much fur. All sick. Me go 'lone, see all—come back." And with that he glided noiselessly as a snake into the thicket and was lost to sight and sound. He was gone but a moment, and returning reported an encampment just around the brow of the hill and on the shore of the pond.

Every preparation was now made for an assault, and as the moonlight streaming over the hill tops whitened half the surface of the water, leaving the remainder of pond and hill blacker for its brightness, a rush was made for the centre of the camp, and an indiscriminate slaughter commenced.

The Ontarios, dazed with surprise at the suddenness of the onslaught, and stupefied by the lingering effects of the previous night's debauch, were long in rallying with anything like effect. Indeed they did not rally, save here and there in groups, but such bands or knots fought with the ferocity of wounded wildcats. Fought like furies, but half at random, often mistaking their own men for their assailants. The Hill Indians made no mistakes, except in the initiatory movement; but what could a brook against an avalanche? They had undertaken too much. They should have relied more upon

stealth and artifice and less upon prowess. They were turned and twisted like individuals in a popular panic, were rocked and rolled in blind obedience to a blinder surge. They became cloyed of useless killing. They could nowhere find the women. As yet, not one of them was badly hurt, although not one escaped contusion. Men whose heavy chests had rarely responded with heaving to an irksome task, now panted like oxen over-spent. But still they kept on, and every now and then some sharp report of firearms cleft its way along the answering wind to meet its countersound that came like echo from the distant pines. The single rifle carried by each of the attacking parties was the only signal that each was busy with its feast of death.

An alarm was sounded by a Hill Indian.

“Cap’n down; Wigwam! Wigwam!” and nineteen answering voices shouted “Wigwam!”

There was a knot of struggling men—there was a circle of swinging tomahawks that encompassed it. Whoops and yells on every hand told of dazed Indians groping in the shadow of old 'Bumskit, slaughtering their own kith and kin as the knot and circle made its way out of the thick of the melee, out of the general riot into the deeper darkness of the forest and along the ridge that stretches away toward Rattlesnake Hill on the southeast.

The Hill Indians were again out of the turmoil and burying themselves deeper and deeper in the forest. But the Northmen would miss them and soon be upon their trail, if any was discernible. Indian art must again

assert itself. To follow one trail would be easy. To follow ten might lead to mistake. If the ten left but one chance in the number to follow the senseless, bleeding form of the wounded white man, it left but confusion when half the trails were made by two or three fugitives abreast, as its necessity or purpose became a woodman's enigma.

The Hill Indians scattered like turkeys startled by the report of a hunter's rifle, but the route was quickly developed into system. The young scout was more than a warrior—was an accomplished tactician.

And all this while the Pines had been the scene of a pandemonium. The subtle chief had led his braves unobserved to the very spot, to the square rod upon which lay, wrapped each in an Indian blanket, the exhausted white sleepers—the four Sergeants. The fifth, the baby,¹ had been slaughtered by a savage on the way. The child had been carried in the arms of its wayworn mother. The infant moaned, the mother groaned, and the Indian dismissed the encumbrance.

In the circle about the captives, close as men can lie, were sleeping Indians.

As steals the prowling woodscat on its prey, and with a step as noiseless, Wandee had entered the charmed circle, and five picked braves had followed, while their companions crouched outside awaiting their chief's success or

¹The mother lagged from exhaustion. An Indian took the child, tomahawked it and cast it aside.

his signal for an onslaught. He had contrived to awaken the women, without a sound that would disturb a drowsing hare. He had used some necromancy—charm, some name, some spell of witchcraft, may be, and had led them out of the circle of the guard. But they are scarcely out when little Netty stumbles over a sleeper in the darkness, and the pantomime has ended in an opening tragedy.

The stout arm of Wandee has caught up Susan, but at the moment an Indian intercepts him. Is it an Indian? Paint, forest shadows and dusky moonlight combined are insufficient to cheat the searching eye of the Quinsigamond. Two tomahawks meet in the air, and Eugene Archer's glances and flies off, while he reels, and his blood spurts full in the face of the Indian. The name of Wandee, and an English curse are the only retort, as the sound of flying feet bearing the precious burden dies away in the pines far up the hillside.

The child and the two remaining women are being carried by strong arms, but against overwhelming opposition, for the Ontarios have swarmed like bees upon them, and the Hill men are battling a living wall. It was the Merrimac against the sea; what could it avail? Torn and tossed, stripped of their living booty, five of them down in their moccasins, what could the fifteen do? The wounded men, screened by the darkness, creep to a thicket and are gone. Three more shoot down the brook to the far away Quinnapoxit. Some fly along the ridge west of Tehassit, some are gone, no one knows whither;

gone where Indians dazed with fire-water can never find them. Gone with their scalps.

And the girl of Sagatabscot is again free, but her rescuer knows not himself which way to fly for safety. Can her freedom be maintained? Will she escape her swift pursuers? and can her red gallant break the cordon and set her feet upon the soil of Wigwam?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FLIGHT.

BLIND rage succeeded the bewilderment of the previous night, when, at daybreak, it was ascertained by a close examination of the incoming trails, that a mere handful of warriors had not only slain many of their best men, but had created a panic still more fatal, to say nothing of the rescue of a prisoner whose beauty had already so far compromised her safety that the closest watch and constant attendance of the head chief had been necessary to protect her from insult if not from outrage. Upon her appearance in Tehassit as a captive, she had been claimed by the rude Ontario chief as his especial, individual property, notwithstanding his engagement with, and promise to, Archer.

Long before daylight the chiefs at Asnebumskit had been to the Pines to compare notes. It was not, however, until sunrise that the fact stared them in the face that not more than two score men had wrought greater havoc with their numbers than had resulted from all the casualties that had been met since they crossed the head of Lake Ontario. Indeed they had been seriously reduced in the number of fighting men, as not only had very many been killed outright, but the score of badly wounded

was such as would necessitate some days delay in the homeward march.

To aggravate this beyond endurance, not a scalp could be counted as part compensation for their loss; as, although they seemed to know that some of their assailants had been killed, yet they must have secured their own scalps, for not a friend remained to secrete them, none could have carried them away, and still not a stranger's face could be found in all that tally of the dead.

The truth was, none had been killed, nor even wounded beyond the possibility of taking themselves out of the insane melee that was raging. The northern Indians, thanks to rum, surprise and darkness, had done most of their own killing. But the extreme physical efforts of the night had expelled their worst enemy through the pores of the skin. They were no longer under the influence of alcoholic stimulant, nor subject to the after stupefaction of its fumes. They could now think like sane men.

It was not difficult to guess out the little tribe that had inflicted this terrible chastisement, even if the sober eyes of Archer had not testified to its reality, for Archer was by no means among the dead, although he was suffering from a wound that would forever disfigure his cheek and scalp. Never mind, Eugene, you will have but little further use for beauty.

Only the Hill Indians could be guilty of this slaughter, and the Northmen in solemn council determined they

would never again see Ontario until they could wear the best of the Quinsigamond scalps in their girdles. But how were they to get possession of them? Did the Northmen dare to beard the lion in his den? To face two hundred warriors in their own stronghold, after a handful, only two score of their warriors, had at the same time entered two hostile camps and managed to kill twice their own number and not leave a scalp?

There was, however, a recourse. Already part of their band was aiding the Twin Lake chief to crush out the Wigwam Indians, and they would make the result doubly sure by joining forces with them. Tehuanto had said he held captive the chief of the Quinsigamonds, and also a white man, his friend, and the white man was a great warrior; said that he was keeping his captives for torture; and although Archer had declared that he held a hand-to-hand encounter with the red chief at the hill of Pines only the night before, and was indebted to Wandee and none other for the hideous scalp and cheek wound, yet his say-so went for naught, or at best for a mistake in recognition, for within a day they had parted company with the Washakim, and it was then he had spoken exultingly of his famous captives. How were the two statements so much at variance to be reconciled? The white man must have been the victim of bewilderment, the result of surprise and uncertainty of vision in the darkness.

With their great leader and the valorous white man no longer to lead them, they might possibly, indeed they

had already done some severe skirmishing, but they could never stand a siege.

Nothing was now to be gained by throwing out trailers. Enough were already out, and as some hours had passed since the night attack, it was now too late. Some had returned, but brought no intelligence, brought nothing but tidings of trails found only to be lost again. Trails lost like bird tracks, as if the makers had stepped off into the trackless air. The war party must move back upon the plantation. But first they must bury their dead, for no Indian ever, except to save his own scalp, left his comrade for crows and foxes to wrangle over; and to dig ninety graves was no trifling task.

The graves were dug—dug in the earth with tomahawks and knives, and sharpened sticks, and with human fingers. And ninety warriors, stark and stiff, were bent into a sitting posture, facing the sunrise, with their arms beside them, and with roots and corn cakes and berries for their journeys need—sitting bolt upright, waiting for that after-dawn. Ninety Indian warriors, who three hours ago clawed at turf and twig in desperation lest they should lose their hold upon terrestrial things, now sat as mute, as meek and motionless, as if their earthly parts, spirit-driven, had never leaped to the wild notes of discord.

Animated with the spirit of revenge, the Ontarios prepared to retrace their steps and to reinforce the already numerous body that was awaiting orders to advance upon the no less feared than hated Hill tribe.

Many of the trailers were still out, but they would in time fall back into the main body on its way.

They had made mistakes fatal to pursuit, both at Asnebumskit and the Pines and—We must shift the scene.

When the young captain was struck down in the fight at the pond and the attack was so summarily ended, he was carried, as has been said, along the ridge south of Asnebumskit. The young warrior whose conduct had so valiantly confirmed the white man's judgment of his parts, had so skillfully managed the retreat that his own route and the way of the white man left but a single trail for half a mile, when one was added, and in the course of a mile four more separate, converging trails increased the little party to seven in number (one of which left no trail whatever), to be again lost, all save one, until they come to the little brook,—the Rattlesnake, running due east into the Tehassit, and when the seven men were joined again it was after wading the Rattlesnake to near the summit of the hill, the place designated at the outset as the rendezvous.

And so the young warrior and his charge escaped. He had borne his senseless burden, being spelled by whiles, as by preconception his trail was crossed or met, only to resume it after a running rest, through the six miles of forest. They had reached the ragged, ledgy, boulder-ridden eastern slope of Rattlesnake Hill and were comparatively safe.

But one other spot so wild and unfrequented could have been found this side of Wachusett, and that spot was Stone House Hill,—the point aimed at by Wandeë when he scrambled up the Hill of Pines with his fair burden.

Among the rocks at Rattlesnake, now that their pursuers had been beguiled into following other and purposely deceptive trails, the little party and their wounded charge might rest, as nothing on the hill in the way of game offered an inducement even to the near-at-hand Tehassits to approach, while its crouching, fierce, and treacherous ordinary denizens, the yellow rattler, and the brindled, short-tailed prowler with the tufted ears, tendered no hospitable greeting, nor tolerated obtrusion, except, when awed by numbers, temporary retreat was seeming acquiescence.

The hill served nature merely as a corral to which the higher brutes might round up brutish abominations. It was a lair for lynxes, snakes and wildcats, numbers of which harbored among the rocks, while here and there a bald eagle built his nest secure among the tangles of the gloomy hemlocks; and here, as at Stone House Hill and on the east brow of Wachusett, the great yellow rattler held undisputed dominion over rock and turf.

But these otherwise waste acres, with their stunted patches of alluvium, were rich in herbage of the character resorted to by the primitive race for medicinal virtues, and the Indians, whose renown as warriors must consist as much in their skill to heal as to inflict wounds, were

not slow in ransacking the hillsides and culling herbs that might serve them in their present need.

The captain had recovered consciousness with the first hour's rest, and it was ascertained that his hurts were limited to severe contusions on the back and head, the effect of clubbing, rather than of the more usual implements of Indian warfare. A few day's rest, and the frequent application of bruised herbs, promised a speedy restoration to normal health and vigor. And here we leave him to discover what has become of Wandee, for no weaver ever followed loom but must take up his broken threads or spoil his warp.

When it was learned by the Hill Indians at the Pines that the women of the Sergent family were there, every other consideration,—revenge, booty, glory, scalps even, all were merged in the sole determination to effect a rescue. Cap'n John should learn for once that an Indian can be gallant as well as revengeful and bloody. The reader already knows how nearly they approached complete success. But for the fatal stumble of the child, the morning would have found the prisoners free lodgers at Wigwam Hill, for a safe but narrow passage through the lines had been disclosed to them by the Packachoags, and already once taken advantage of.

But fate was against them, and in a moment they were battling for their lives against ten times their number.

We have heard the rustling of twigs, heard the crack-

ling of dry boughs under foot, and have seen Wandee dash out of the semi-darkness into the denser blackness of shadow at the Hill of Pines with the prime object of his mission within his grasp.

He lost no time in burying himself deeper and deeper in the protecting gloom of the forest, until the shrieks of battle died away in whispers upon his ear. But although a strong arm might, unassisted, carry a woman for a mile, it was unequal to a much greater task. The foot of the highland that forms the base of Asnebumskit on the east had been reached at a point overlooking the meadow that skirts the precipitous west side of Stone House Hill.¹ Below him was the meadow and Tehassit Brook. Beyond, Stone House looks over 'Bumskit.

Overtasked nature now rebelled at the extortion, and the warrior staggered—tottered—fell. Fell without a spoken word. Fell in a swoon,—the effect of drawing upon his muscular account to the last item of the spirit's credit. But the woman was there, the brook, the cool of the morning, and a heart still undismayed beneath life's retiring symbols. The woman, the water, the air and the unconquerable stomach of the Indian revived him just in time to see the glimmer of daylight over Stone House. Just in time to hear a shrill screech upon the western hill side. It might be a screech owl just at hand, scolding at the hasty sunlight that robbed her of her sighted feast. It might be a lynx snarling at the

¹The meadow is now the bed of one of Worcester's reservoirs.

tardy hare, that kept its burrow and prolonged his fast. But the Indian knew better; knew it was neither; knew it was an Indian upon a new-found trail, giving tongue like a wolf to encourage his mates as he unsnarls a double by scenting a divergence. Every muscle of the sturdy chief was swelling for another effort. He was on his feet. He reached forward to take the little white woman in his arms, but she beckoned him on toward the hill, speaking for the first time since she crossed the impounding circle at the Hill of Pines.

"Go on, Wandee. I will follow. I could chase a fawn across my father's fields, and I can follow an Indian for an hour."

Smiling from under his low brow, with his large black eyes, while his compressed lips seemed unready to similarly respond, he said :

"Brave, leetle squaw !"

And shutting together his heavy jaws, while the kindling eyes relapsed into a scowl that darkened with determination over his high cheek bones, the once more savage whirled, and with a sweeping stride went for the bald face of Stone House just where the brook used to break at the declivity and rush away in the fast falling rapids below. Bald, it was, indeed, but here and there a rock crevice, a ledge, or a foot of earth lodged by some ancient land slide, or deposited by that great glacier that hung for ages choking the ravine, gave root room to a scraggy, leaning hemlock, and the hemlock served the double purpose of partially screening the fugitives in the

ascent and aiding hand and foot in climbing the rough ledges. When near the summit the Indian halted and beckoning Susan behind a boulder to secure her from observation, availed himself of the now open day to reconnoiter.

The passing Indians, ten in number, whose wild whoop had startled the fugitives, descended the hill side and turned abruptly toward Tehassit, evidently upon a trail, but probably that of one of their own men whose nimbler foot or less devious course had placed him far in advance of his fellows.

Their mistake, if mistake it was, left Wandee and his prize secure, for the present at least, provided they could endure remaining in the quarters they then occupied until some propitious circumstance occurring should seem to warrant the attempt to pass the lines which at present barred their further progress. But something more than immunity from danger of rambling feet and prying eyes must be provided for. If the woods were full of Indians, as he suspected, they might be compelled to remain where they were for some days, in which event the woman must have food and shelter.

For a white man to have constructed a temporary dwelling in the midst of acres of rocky debris would have been no serious task. But what could a warrior know of labor, beyond the skill requisite in fashioning an oar, or a canoe, or perhaps his bow and arrow? He did not construct his own wigwan, nor even plant or harvest his corn, but left it to the squaws to do for him.

A red squaw might upon this occasion have been put to the task, but this was a white squaw. A squaw whose finger tips were delicate as the petals of the white pond lily, whose lovely skin was tinged with autumn sunsets, whose lips were red like the red of barberry, a neck and forehead crowned her person, bleached to the snow cap's hue upon the great Penobscot mountain, and her eyes seemed cut from the sapphire of the blue dome of space. What could the white squaw do? She was the idol of the grand captain and—so the white parson had said—was made in the image of God. And who is God but He who whispers in the wind and bellows in the storm? He whom the mother of our tribe, the Witch of Wigwam holds communion with—the Great Spirit? The white squaw must have a lodge, and the chief of the Quinsigamonds is none too good to build it for her.

The early white settlers, parties to the second settlement of Worcester, found upon the summit of this hill, a rude stone cabin—the same occupied a century later by fugitive Royalists, and it was this structure that gave the hill its name. A cabin thrown together by arms grown sinewy through war and chase; sinews that found a motor in deference to beauty and bravery in another race. It was a king's offering at the shrine of animated splendor.

The cabin completed, the task of a day, with the hours taken from two, for in the meantime snares must be set, snares strung with the braids of the coarse black hair of the Indian's scalp.

Four days had passed, as early one morning down by

the brook Wandee jumped to cover at the sound of voices. Some praying Packachoags were passing, and apparently hunting closely for something other than game. Nothing a Hill Indian could better trust than one of these peaceful, quiet-loving neighbors, with whom they had for generations lived in the utmost harmony, even intermarrying. Indeed, Wandee himself, although reared at Wigwam, was a born Packachoag, son of Sagamore John by a squaw of Wigwam.

As they passed where the chief lay concealed, they stopped short, looked into one another's faces questioningly, as if some new light was breaking in upon them, and stooping to the earth, examined the yet dewy sod. A moment's scrutiny sufficed to satisfy them, or at least to awaken surmises approximating to certainty, and in a low voice they pronounced the name of Wandee.

It is not likely that any peculiarity of footprint or trail that the chief had left led them to the suspicion, but rather the certainty that it was made by a skulker, added to the fact that the chief, of whom they were in search, was uppermost in their minds.

However it might have happened, Wandee stepped from his hiding place and was warmly greeted in the Nipnet tongue.

It required but a moment to acquaint him with the fact that the captain was alive and safely lodged at Rattlesnake Hill with six warriors. That all of the forty who were engaged in the midnight adventure, except those at Rattlesnake, had within two days made their way into

the home lodge, and that throughout the woods between Stone House and the Lake were scattered parties of the northern tribes, watching every avenue by which a fugitive might reach the Hill, for they were thoroughly persuaded that several of them were still lurking in the woods.

Now that the Packachoags had accomplished the purpose of their long search, they turned their steps down the brook and were soon lost to sight.

Their first object now was to acquaint the white man's party with their success, and to do this without creating suspicion that might lead to detection was no simple task.

Following Tehassit Brook between banks thickly grown with hazel and black alder, wading the stream for the entire distance, until, at a point near the old Mohawk path, or way to Springfield settlement, they came to the little Rattlesnake Brook, and following this, still keeping the water bed, they had eluded even the suspicion of a trail, except for a single, private mishap, and were within the captain's temporary lodge.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE WOMAN IN PERIL.

UP to this time the captain had hardly a hope that any of the Sergeant family had been saved. Certain it was no one of Wandee's party knew of his escape with the woman, although within a few feet of him when he disappeared in the forest at Pine Hill. The darkness of the pine shadows had done as much to hide his movements from his friends as from his enemies.

That Wandee had not returned to Wigwam was of course known to the Packachoags, and through them every condition and movement at the Hill, the plantation ruins, and throughout the cordon which had remained now for six days without an advance was made known at Rattlesnake, for the praying Indians of Packachoag were regarded by the Northmen as feeble, inoffensive creatures, who cared more for a good dinner than for a green scalp, and as such, were in a manner despised, while at the same time savage superstition wrought in their behalf, so much so that their persons were in a degree respected as sacred, they being by profession agents and representatives of the man God, whom they claimed to be, in their lax orthodox mode of expression, one and the same with the Great Spirit. This innocent play upon heathen credulity found

recompense in something like affiliation and made their presence tolerable, even at the Northmen's council fires.

The praying Packachoags could go back and forth, up and down, scarcely noticed, except at such times as they fell into religious exhortations, when they were usually dismissed with a contemptuous grunt or left to bestow the residue of a sermon upon the wind.

Now that it was revealed at Rattlesnake not only that Wandee was still alive, but that he had in present safe keeping that life of all others on which the white man doted, the captain reconciled himself in a measure to his temporary confinement; not, however, without frequent impulses to hazard life by some midnight venture in the direction of Stone House Hill. But against such a proposition the Indians set their faces with a determination unusual to their race, when in opposition to the whites. They would hear nothing of it. They had so far managed with a discretion that had elicited commendation from the white chief, and now he would himself render abortive all their efforts, all their pains, and compromise the safety of all, merely to gratify his wish to look for a moment upon his young squaw.

It needed not half the argument to convince him of the error, and to dissuade him from the undertaking, for in fact the impulse had never approximated to actuation. It was the mere desire, a passing notion that found expression in a careless word, as when one says "I think," but actually does no such a thing, and is merely conscious of a passing notion,—is the idle, passive spectator to a mental panorama.

Where, above the ledges, the broad acres of Rattlesnake hilltop stretch away to the western slope that sheds its waters into the Lynde¹ (that was), when these acres were covered with the sturdy primeval growth of forest trees, and the soil was so shaded that evaporation was in a great degree retarded, the little brook that falls to eastward, the pathway of the Packachoags, was a rushing flume of ice cold water gathered from a hundred springs that bubbled up among the rocks and trickled into shady pools edged with mint and saw grass, and the broad-leaved fern, with here and there a flock of maiden's-hair, and creeping upward and athwart from bush to bough the trailing clematis reached outward to where the sleepy sunlight bathed for one hour the yellow cowslips that waltzed among the eddying waves above a bottom paved with pungent water cresses. Then by the side of rotting logs, the windfalls of a century back, from thickets of elder, alder, and sumach, the grouse (the partridge of New England) was sure to pop out with a running burst, a whirr, and disappearance, unless the snare you set an hour before left him dangling between twig and turf. And by the side of brook and spring and water-pockets, between the roots of trees and under thorns sprayed with sweet red berries, or beneath hazel or black alder, where worms might bore, were woodcock and jacksnipe, pecking if not being pecked at, by the sharp arrows of the crouching hunters who were collecting material to make an evening repast for the always hungry Pachachoags.

¹ Lynde Brook that was, now Leicester reservoir.

A bed of red hot coals, and large flat stones nearly as hot, and green walnut spits stuck in the ground and leaning over the bed of coals, are waiting for the hunters to come in. Partridges, hares, quails, and trout dangling alive upon the birchen twigs, just as the Indians had dragged them with their hands from under the banks, or driven into corrals in the rocky brook bed, were the hunters' recompense. And as the spitted toasting game fries and sputters fat upon the coals, we will without ceremony shift the scene.

Wounded Northmen to the number of fifty had been left at Asnebumskit Pond after the midnight affray, unable at once to retire to Tehassit, and many of them lingering between life and death, and for the purpose of seeing them cared for as circumstances would permit, and as the final blow at Wigwam Hill was yet delayed, the Ontario chief proposed to Tehuanto to accompany him to the sick men's camp, for company's sake.

As the two chiefs were passing up the valley of Tehassit with a company of ten warriors, drawn equally from the forces of each, a sort of unnecessary body guard, and as they crossed the brook at a point where they purposed to ascend the hills Tehuanto stopped and called the attention of the Ontario. For a moment both of them were earnestly engaged, first in examining a naked footprint in the sand, and afterward in scrutinizing the shore for several rods up and down. A single, naked footprint. That was all. And what could that imply? That a

man in crossing the brook had stepped upon the sand, nothing more. It was made with the right foot, and although nearly at right angles with the stream, it inclined downward, with the current. Was it the track of a mere passer-by, who left a single naked foot-print and its counterpart nowhere? The wily sense, and sharp, divining eye of the Indian told another tale. Whoever stepped upon the sandy shore was following the stream to avoid leaving a trail, and his foot was bared because the wet moccasin might slip upon the slimy stones, and at this place his treacherous foot had slidden from a mossy, water covered rock, and he, the owner, to recover without a fall, had leaped to the little bed of sand left uncovered by the low state of water.

It was a blind trail, and a blind trail betokened secrecy. Secrecy at this time and place, when it was believed fugitives were lurking in the woods, naturally excited suspicion of something approximating to the reality. Should the trail be followed down the brook, in the direction indicated by the foot-print? No! He might go miles, but the brook above was short, and whoever it was must have entered somewhere, and the trail at that point would lead to the object of his coming. It would at least aid in unravelling the mystery. Tehuanto would follow the trail back; and without ado he and his five men left the Ontario warriors to go their way and started up the stream.

A mile above, in the meadow just opposite the rocky face of Stone House, an artfully concealed, but still dimly

apparent trail was found, and it led directly up the hill. The new, green grass that had been trodden upon had been lifted after passing, and to the casual observer, or indeed to any but a born woodsman, showed no more depression than might have resulted from a strong wind or a heavy rain, but signs of lodgment from wind or rain would have been obliterated within twenty-four hours, would have been lifted by the influence of sunlight, and neither wind nor rain had occurred for a much longer time. The fox hound's scent is not more acute or reliable than the practiced eye of an Indian.

Great circumspection must now be used, for they must if possible find the object of their search without being themselves discovered, as perhaps the trail led back to some secreted force. That the naked footprint in the brook bed was not that of a fugitive, was next to certain, as it led by the direction of the stream almost into the Tehassit camp, a region dangerous to the last degree to such, and still, at one end or the other of the trail were fugitives, else why the blind?

Cautiously climbing the craggy face of Stone House they soon became aware that the hill was inhabited, but to what extent was far from certain.

As they neared the top the artificial arrangement of stone where Wandee had erected the cabin, came into view, and was at once surrounded and entered. Once more the little white woman was in the hands of hostile Indians, but not this time to be carried to the wilds of Ontario. She could now be given directly to Eugene

Archer and the Washakim's debt would be cancelled, for although he had demurred on account of some superstitious fear to personally undertake the murder of Sergeant and the capture of the woman, yet he had committed himself to aid the white man in securing his prize as an equivalent for his services in giving such information as might make it practicable to seize upon the person of the white captain and Wandelee.

That the two had since escaped did not absolve even the Indian from the obligation. Nor was Tehuanto further bound to the Ontario in respect to his lost prisoners, for the captive in effecting, however it might have occurred, her own deliverance, had severed the bond.

It was soon found useless to endeavor to learn who were the companions of the woman in this wild isolation. Threats and persuasions were alike futile, and discouraged and baffled he bade his captive follow as he led the way eastward toward Washakim.

From a position among the rocks where could be seen all that transpired, Wandelee, indignant, chagrined and disappointed, had remained inactive, because impotent to stay the tide of misfortune. Foolhardiness might have attempted a rescue. That spirit of impatience and impetuosity which snaps its fingers at odds and insanely dares what judgment would rebuke, might have left at this time at least a scalp, and a human carcass for the crows and foxes to feed upon, but an old warrior was too wise to undertake so forlorn a hope. He could bide his time.

The sun had scarcely disappeared behind Asnebumskit, when the swift foot of Wandee was making its way down the Tehassit stream with a view of joining the party at Rattlesnake and devising some means, if possible, to again come in possession of the twice lost woman of Sagatabscot. But in this he was doomed to disappointment. Indians were sauntering up and down the valley, presumably as guards at post, but really sleepy, listless, and indifferent from self-assurance that no enemy existed throughout the region.

But one course lay open for the chief to pursue, one alternative remained. The great woods of Quinnapoxit,¹ now that its warriors and hunters are occupied with the siege of Wigwam Hill, must be nearly barren of fighting material, and as for squaws,—when braves are absent they merely huddle. He would lie about the north woods till opportunity for action offered. And so the chief retraced his steps.

We may leave the twenty hours succeeding the recapture of Susan a blank, as in the interim nothing in the line of this narrative in any way important occurred. But at the end of twenty hours, looking over to Washakim we see, tied to a stake in the midst of a circle of wigwams, the little woman to whom peril was fast becoming a normal condition.

Grouped about her were squaws, and while she seemed to be the immediate charge of three warriors, the only

¹ More recently the "French Woods," or later still, "Quinnapoxit."

ones left in the lodge, all others, even the old men, having joined the besieging lines, some to do active service, some from motives of curiosity, or to gain experience at safe positions, from the interest and excitement attendant upon active warfare. The woman at the stake stood with arms swung backward and encircling it, bound at the wrists by raw-hide throngs. Her ankles were not confined, as, by maintaining the free use of her lower limbs, she might the more agreeably posture in the contortive agonies of mortal dissolution.

Crosswise, laid upon four sides of her, were dry sticks of heavy limb wood, while the space between, up to the verge of the stump upon which she stood, was filled with punk and pitch pine knots, as elaborate an arrangement as ever sent a witch's soul with a martyr's *carte blanche* into paradise.

All now seemed ready for the frightful consummation of an act more diabolical than ever found its way into the inventive talent of other than an American savage or a religious bigot. A blazing torch was in the hand of a warrior. The squaws stood all agape, half pitying the sweet, defenseless pattern of purity. And that psychological accident,—that sure to be present only when never expected,—the Witch of Wigwam, whose power of divination seemed to reach out into the occult and to fathom the mysteries of time and space, and whose mission seemed to be to occupy strange and unlooked-for positions—the Witch of Wigwam was there; marching from somewhere into the circle; stopping and

standing aloof from all; scarcely turning toward the victim; scarcely heeding the movements of the warriors; standing dumb and passionless as yet appeared, save as without moving muscle or turning head, those sparkling, wild, black eyes, so full of venom, fire and fury, were taking in each detail of the scene,—gloating, maybe, over some fateful promise of the hour to come. There is mystery behind those snakish eyes boding some excess of violence.

One of the Indians now approaches the woman at the stake. Until now she had looked upon her murderers, upon the pitying squaws, the old squaw sorceress, and the threatening fagots at her feet, as calmly, as benignly, almost smilingly, as ever dying saint looked upon the manner of his martyrdom. But now her soul seemed writhing in affright. She struggled with her bonds, and her eyes protruded, while that mobile under lip rolled up rigidly against its mate, showing that at last, or by some means, a martyr's *sang-froid* may be conquered. Grief, fear, and loathing were centered in the contortions of that under lip. A word was spoken by the Indian in her ear.

“I will never! Never! Fire the fagots! I’m weary with waiting!” was the reply. She had heard the voice she feared and hated, and had seen her evil genius through his savage disguise, and with this screaming exclamation, the woman’s head sank upon her bosom, her eyelids closed, the unbound yellow hair fell forward over face and neck, and all the flesh left visible was livid, semi-

transparent, dead as marble. He who had addressed her started back, in fright perhaps at the effect of his words; perhaps in amazement that so frail a being could be so utterly unconquerable. He had not really intended that denial should be followed by cremation as his threat implied. The arrangement was intended to frighten her into acquiescence, but the details were too complete. He had not counted upon the promptness of savage discipline.

The Indian with the torch leaped forward, eager to perform his part, and so swift was its execution that when his director sprang toward the stake to arrest him, he saw the red flame toying with the pitch to late to remedy—saw a dense cloud of thick, white smoke—heard the sharp crackle of blazing twigs, and here and there a long, transitory tongue of flame leaped upward, snake-like, to slink back as soon and hide itself within the smoking pile, as if waiting for the spirit to return and sense its otherwise wasted energies.

And as it waited the sharp crack of a rifle was heard close at hand.

In view was a little wreath of light gray smoke above the hazel thicket. A groan, a yell of pain, supplemented by an English curse, a flying tread and a swash-like crashing through bones, was all the sound; but a dead Indian, and the fractured wrist of Eugene Archer in his war paint, and a tomakawk buried in the skull of a third Indian by the now transported old witch, argued of complications in a previous arrangement.

As we watch the squaws and papooses scatter like a

brood of young grouse for any shelter, the knife of Wandee has cut the thongs, and himself, scorched and stifled, issues from the stake fire with the twice rescued white woman, and is gone.

No living thing is now within that circle of wigwams save that old squaw, and she is down upon her knees with hands and eyes upraised. It may be in prayer; may be in thanksgiving. Her Master, the Great Spirit, has nerved her arm and steeled her sensibilities to all but pity for the little white squaw and loyalty to Wigwam Hill.

We see scattered about, the debris of the plantation's ruin, the booty of the Indian. Bottles, kegs, kegs iron bound, and little kegs with wooden hoops—keep them of the wooden hoops away from fire. We see no living thing within the lodge. The squaws are placing distance between themselves and the objects of their terror. The old squaw has vanished, has gone up, or down; and Eugene Archer?—The woods must answer for him. He would turn his back upon no danger visible, but boldness will not quench a shade, and courage bows to mystery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A CHAPTER OF DIPLOMACY.

DURING the twenty-four hours that succeeded the recapture of the white woman by the Washakim chief, the praying Packachoags had once reported at Rattlesnake the condition of things at Wigwam Hill, and the Hill lodge had been fully apprised of all that had transpired, both in the enemies' line and concerning the white chief, as also that Wandee had been tracked to Stone House and the white girl recaptured, but whether she was now a captive in the Northmen's camp had not been learned, nor had any information whatever been gleaned of the fate of Wandee. Supposably he was in the woods, for had he been either taken or killed the fact would have been uppermost in the minds, and loudest upon the tongues of the Washakims who waited impatiently for the settlement of a feud, and of the Northmen who were yearning for revenge.

The force comprising the besiegers had been augmented, but mostly by that class of strolling savages who travelled almost continually, and chiefly that they might eat the bread of others' providing, and yet, they in part compensated the donors of the little bounty they received by reciting every incident that had occurred for weeks

along their lines of travel, which often extended over hundreds of miles, and being constantly on the move and finding welcome lodgment among the various tribes, they became in some degree familiar with the different dialects and could easily make themselves briefly entertaining.

There were tramps in those days. But shifting, lazy, and vagabondish as they really were, there were perhaps no more useful or important members of society, for they were the only news gleaners and carriers between the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. By means of them the knowledge of passing events over vast areas of country was made quite general and accurate; and no matter that the natal lodge of a stroller might be at war with, or the deadly enemy of the host, his occupation was *carte blanche* for all his requirements and a guarantee of personal safety.

In all savage and semi-barbarous conditions, as indeed in all stages and phases of civilization, up to the time when the newspaper press became practically efficient as a substitute in the dissemination of current information, the tramp was at worst a necessary evil. A wise and kindly provision of nature. Better men and better communities than these aborigines acknowledged their importance, and scarce two generations back, here in New England, our grandmothers rarely turned a "walk about" away hungry or shelterless, unless by previous misdoings or a blemished record she counted him unworthy.

The Irish, Scotch, and Welsh minstrels, the itinerant

fakirs of the East, the Troubadour of Middle Ages wandering through the south of Europe, the Pagan philosophers, and all the early poets, and some of the Christian saints, were unmitigated tramps, and fulfilled every function pertaining to the Order.

But by advice of the Washakim chief it was now ordered that every stranger must either pass to the rear or pass on, for they had stayed their stay, and arrangement were being made that none except sworn enemies to the Quinsigamonds must be made aware of, not even a praying Packachoag, should pass the line, although the latter were still allowed to enter freely.

So closely the combined forces kept watch along the line that it would have been extremely hazardous for the Rattlesnake party to attempt its passage by stealth, and to try and force it would have been the height of presumptuous folly. There was, however, in the near future, a time to come which, seized at its exact moment, promised success; and to ascertain the precise hour of its occurrence, before the fact, began now to be the all absorbing topic in the minds of the Packachoags to whom the solution had been assigned.

When the final advance should be ordered, and the lines were leaving their established posts, in the excitement and confusion incident to the change,—the dread, the longing, the looking forward, the expectancy attendant upon compliance with marching orders, many ways would, of necessity be for a while left unguarded and open to a stealthy foot and subtle mind.

The Packachoags were alive to the importance of ascertaining, prior to the event, the hour fixed upon to move forward, and of this hour the rank and file of the barbarous Northmen could not hope to know. But the Packachoags shrewdly conceived that the trusted little band of Nipnets in actual service would in due time become masters of the secret, as upon them would devolve much of the execution of the plan and all the ill effects of disaster. The moment the all important secret could be probed the swift feet of the converts must carry its burden not only to Wigwam Hill, but to Rattlesnake also. They, themselves, could easily have passed the lines to Wigwam now, but, in the possible event of detection, even if they escaped with their scalps, the suspicion of treachery would have led to strict surveillance, and all hope of rendering further and greater aid to their friends would have been brought to a summary close.

An Indian may lose courage, lose heart, may break faith, or may do anything but forget his cunning; but when he ceases to be wary he forfeits his manhood and becomes as contemptible as a squaw whose sole mission is to plant corn, to bake bread, and to breed and rear pap-pooes.

The praying Packachoags maintained their dignity. They cajoled the scalp-takers of repute, and paid marked homage to the great chiefs of the tribes in the alliance. They watched and waited and hourly jabbered with the patrols. They were on the best of terms with them, and so complete became the affiliation that a few hours after

the promulgation of the order, they could come or go in any direction unquestioned and unrestrained, but they had now no wish to avail themselves of liberty outside the prescribed limit. They were doing better as they were, passing by threes up and down the lines and meeting in some secluded spot to compare advices.

They became now more than ever loquacious respecting the new faith. They declared that having given their hearts entirely to the Master, things of only secular importance were to them lighter than air, and flew from their shoulders like the down from a thistle. That mundane existence, to these "worms of the dust" (they had garnered into their vocabulary not a little of churchly expression) was utterly valueless, except as a training school for the life eternal. They pretended to hold verbal communication and discourse with spirits of the air, and were frequently attacked with spasms of proselytism, as they declared, at the instigation of returning souls of the damned. Regeneration, and baptism by water, was ever at their tongues' end. Repentance was urged, with remission of sins as a result, and bliss ineffable from everlasting to everlasting, as the promised recompense, was the burden of all exhortation, except, as in pursuance of methods they had been taught, they pictured by word painting, by vocal imitation, and by frantic gesticulation the tortures of the unregenerate dead consigned to limitless kettles of (they did n't quite understand the substance of "fire and brimstone," and so substituted) blazing pitch. And they laid great stress upon submission and confidence,

for to that the converts in reality looked as a key to that ulterior effect—the unbosoming of a secret.

Growing more and more zealous to make converts, they so exaggerated the manners and methods of the white exhorters that they became a coveted amusement with the hard headed warriors upon whose hands time began to hang heavily. They were looked for with greedy expectancy, their antics extolled and themselves cajoled, until nothing seemed too good for a praying Packachoag. They could feed with the Northmen, could pray with the Quinnapoxits, could sing psalms with the Washakims, and they could worm the secrets of every hour out of the too trusting Tehassits.

Time grew big with happenings, present and prospective, and the wily pietists could almost count upon the hour of accouchment. They had now entirely shaken off the reserve, the reticence, peculiar to the race, and were becoming wholly enthusiastic with an affectation of pious jugglery, performing or pretending to the accomplishment of feats such as in after times were ascribed to witchcraft, and still later on to the spirits of what are called dead men. But towards the Tehassits, some of whom were really inclined to religious pursuasion, they applied themselves through more reasonable methods, the true motive being to amuse the infidels and to use the more seriously inclined.

Time had turned twelve in the day, for the sun had passed the meridian, and the Packachoags, three in number, were at Tehassit post on Beaver Brook, where it

crossed the afterward Joe Bill Road, then but an Indian trail.

Five of the Tehassits, the whole post, had kneeled in honest, earnest, heartfelt prayer. They had, as instructed, condemned themselves as sinners—"the vilest of the vile,"—and had declared their utmost readiness to renounce "the world, the flesh and the devil," as the Packachoags put it, and were waiting for that new light the praying men had promised them. But it did not come. They had been told it would break in upon them at the moment of entire submission like a full moon through a parting cloud. But the clouds would n't part. They had been assured that an inexpressible buoyancy would take occupancy of their souls, and that they would involuntarily leap to their feet and shout Hallelujah ! But they had n't shouted.

Something was out of joint, and that something was soon discovered through a little tearful conference between the Packachoags. The convicts could never become converts until they had shaken off their minds and consciences something with which their souls were burdened. There must be some sin of past commission, sin of omission, or else some sin in contemplation, and they were now exhorted by the Packachoags to perform that last act of submission—the open sesame to perfect absolution—the verbal confession of sins. They must confess all they had lately done that was evil, and they must avow all they contemplated doing in the near future. They were told by their religious instructors that killing

of men was destroying the image of God. That it was murder, against which God Himself, with His own hand had written a commandment. That to know of intended murder and not to reveal it was in itself murder, and that all murderers were under condemnation by the Great Spirit, God, to be cast into a lake of blazing pitch, where, though forever dying, they cannot die, but must burn forever and ever, while their squaws, who have been given to their enemies, will lean over and look down upon them and laugh at their misfortune. But, on the other hand, to confess was to be forgiven, while to be forgiven was to insure them a crown of everlasting glory brighter than the cloak of the scarlet tanager, more dazzling than the sun at noonday, and as beautiful as an October sunset.

The Tehassits were by this time effectually overcome. It was too big talk for them to withstand, and they surrendered. Let us hope that the pious Packachoags valued their poor souls at a higher rate than their rich secret. The Tehassits caught at the gilded bait. They were repentant sinners. They had been lost, and they eagerly clutched at so cheap a salvation.

Midnight of that very day had been fixed upon to carry Wigwam Hill by storm, and to kill every warrior, squaw, and pappoose of the tribe, so that they should be known no more among the Indians forever. So said the weeping, penitent Tehassits at this cunningly devised confessional. Said they would watch until ordered forward, when they would desert and return to Tehassit, and thus atone so far as might be, for the

wicked position they had assumed in this murderous design. They were assured by the praying men that this was the only door left open to salvation.

And was not this, the Tehassits' extremity, the Packachoags' opportunity? The Packachoags thought it was. After nightfall there would be an unguarded place in the lines through which the Rattlesnake fugitives might easily and safely pass to Wigwam Hill.

The Packachoags achieved success through what the white men call diplomacy, with the Indians it was a mere trick.

Early in the evening the lines by posts were ordered to advance. To creep nearer the intended victims, and to await the summons for a general attack. From Muddy Pond, a feeder of the lake, they were ordered to what is now the city farm's brook. From Burncoat Plain and North Pond, to Green Hill and Bear Brook. Those posted on Kettle Brook at its junction with the Tehassit were ordered to Plantation Ridge, overlooking the lake and the Beaver Brook post, the Tehassits were to move up to the Swamp of Pines and occupy the great trail between the lake and the site of the burned plantation.

Two hours after sunset that night three Packachoags passed through the swamp without danger of discovery, and later on three of the praying men with the Rattlesnake party came down the Mohawk path, and crossing the little plantation swamp,¹ struck the unguarded lake trail and headed for Wigwam Hill.

¹ Many acres in the very heart of Worcester, were, until 1840, a mere quagmire.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DOOM OF WASHAKIM.

EARLY in the evening of the day when the penitent Tehassits made their confession to the praying men of Packachoag, the little plat at the foot of Wigwam Hill presented an unusual appearance. The squaws and pap-pooes were being conveyed across the lake where themselves and the canoes were to be left until fate decided the struggle which the Packachoags had warned the Quinsigamonds was to begin almost at once.

The plan of operations, so desperate in design that it left scarcely an alternative to victory or death, was devised by a young chief chosen for the emergency.

The few warriors who conducted the non-combatants across the lake, were to see them safely landed, to complete instructions, and arrange signals which should guide the squaws' movements under possible contingencies, after which they were to swim back to Wigwam and join in its defense.

Retreat was now practically cut off, and defeat signified nothing short of annihilation; for although this tribe, living always by the water, were almost of it, and nearly as much at home in its embrace as the fishes that swam it, yet, in the event of defeat, when they must avail

themselves of that last resort and make the plunge, worn and wasted by the toil of conflict, they knew too well that they must inevitably become a sure and easy prey to the exultant marksmen on the shore behind.

The hope was indeed a forlorn one, but the warriors seemed no whit dismayed. They moved leisurely about, with as much apparent composure as if waiting only to be called to eat.

This one overhauled an old flint-lock musket, probed its vent, blew into the muzzle with the piece at half-cock, to learn if the vent was free, snapped the lock, scrutinized and reset the flint, fumbled the trigger, turned the powder from his horn into the pan and flashed it, counted his bullets, stuffed leaves under his belt for ready wads, and apparently satisfied with the result, set his piece against his wigwam, drew out of his belt his scalping knife, and run the ball of his thumb along its edge, glanced at the stone hatchet in his girdle and sauntered off, jerking pebbles into the lake and stooping, watched them by the moonlight as they skipped along the surface as unconcernedly, as carelessly as a schoolboy shaking off his period of confinement; as if life and death hung not in the balance, with death in the long arm. And the conduct of this one, in point of indifference, was a sample of the whole.

At intervals of a few minutes a scout came in; sometimes came from the north, sometimes from the south, and now and then one flying like a rolling stone down the steep declivity of the little mountain, gave some message

or information to the chief in short, sharp, verbal snatches, and was off again; off up the rocky scarp like the startled brood partridge leading the trespasser,—up, over the scarp, and gone.

That the enemy's line was moving up slowly, but surely, like a great tidal wave, like a snake upon the bird it charms, elicited nothing more than an inarticulate, guttural response from the chief, and awakened no perceptible interest among the warriors, not even curiosity that one might observe. And yet every warrior in the camp knew each moment the precise condition of affairs as it was passed in concise, abrupt sentences from man to man, but every muscle of the face, every nerve of the body, had been schooled to the utmost limit of obedience to the will.

Here, there, everywhere, were Indians fully armed, standing with their backs against the trees, sleeping with only half-shut eyes, and ears that could distinguish between sounds, and taking notice of their import, pass the unimportant and sleep on.

Guards had been posted at the summit of the hill to observe and give notice of any hostile approach, but so far nothing had occurred that should demand report; and yet, something beside the guard was in possession of the hill top.

A shadow seemed to flit now and then from behind the scattered scrub oaks on the summit, to creep, cat-like through the brushy sumachs, or to shoot across an open space half seen, half felt, no more a sight than an im-

pression. And now it lies flat and wriggles like a snake, here, there, and disappears behind an enormous boulder, a mass of poised rock separated from, and somewhat unlike, the ledges of the hill.

The rock stood alone, balanced upon perhaps a foot of bed rock, and the power of a man might jostle, but many men could never overturn it.

The figure, shade, ghost, or whatever it might be, seemed now half erect between the boulder and the vertical face of the upper crag there upon Wigwam's summit.

The space between the crag and boulder served scarcely to admit the form, but if it was simply a shade it was infinitely compressible, and, space or none, there was sufficient room.

The thing bore about it some commodity and once it seemed to use its teeth. Now we saw it, indistinctly, seemingly suspended, or floating like a will-o-the-wisp. That might not be; might be but fancy over-wrought, and yet it might both only seem, and be, for things that only seem are sometimes real in another sense, so like reality is that which is but essence of it, itself reality, except we test it by material sense. 'T is moving still. Now weaving as it were some spell, carving some magic circle in the lower air—in the first five inches of the lower strata. Now back, now forth, some wizard conjuration. And now so like a snake again it wriggles off into the darkness; into the shadow of the hemlocks; down the east slope of the hill; down the black wall, over the

precipice into the darkness. It has worked its way in and out among the guards, among eyes as sharp as lynxes, and hearing as acute as the earless wild goose,¹ but if an eye has seen it, it dared not challenge. If an ear had heard it, it dared not conjure it. These Indians were very superstitious, and what they saw or heard was doubtless some intangible minister of fate forging of destinies.

All was quiet on the little flat below. The scouts came and went, and the warriors still slept standing. But now something down here has happened. Something unlooked for, and every warrior is alert, but they give no heed to weapons. They simply walk up to the main wigwam and look down upon the old squaw, seated upon the ground, wrapped in a bear skin,—come from no one knows where. But that old squaw is their guardian angel; the sentient talisman of the tribe; the wraith of a forgotten ancestry, and the braves give a guttural expression of satisfaction and walk back.

What can be in the wrinkled face, low brow, and fierce, black eye of that old squaw that should give a whole nation of warriors heart?

The old squaw is just from Washakim. She left but three hours ago. Her hands are still red with the blood of a Twin Lake Indian. Washakim's tents are empty of warriors to-night. The last male soul took flight at her

¹ "The earless wild goose" only seems so as, without ruffling the short feathers, we make a fruitless search for the appendage.

bidding. Washakim took spoil of the plantation, and a squaw, witch or otherwise, a squaw will steal.

A fire is being built by the main wigwam, and soon the crackling blaze illumines the whole flat, and the steep beyond, and warms the slowly coursing blood in the veins of the sorceress. Bear skins are brought for her to recline upon; cold meat, and bread of bruised corn are set before her, and soon a steaming pot of earthen, boiling sweet herbs savory with pennyroyal, and flavored with honey. And when she had eaten and drank and mused awhile over the fantastic writhing of a pitch pine flame as it worked in and out of the heavy column of smoke, and when she had jabbered in broken, incoherent Nipnap jargon to the shapes and faces waltzing round about among the coals,—turned her stiffened, crooked fingers over and over and dwelt with her snakey eyes upon the blood spots, she too leaned back against the wall of the wigwam and slept.

A courier comes in and reports that the enemy's line is moving up at a rapid pace. Another and another, from different directions, bring a similar report, and away they go again into the darkness. Still not a warrior seems to shake off his lethargy. Still he lounges and broods or sleeps on. But now the heavy bang of an old flint lock on the hill top tells them that the hour has come.

Was ever such a change in men and manner? The Indian that slept but now, is now a fiery dragon, wilder, fiercer than the maddened lynx of his own forest; not a muscle but seems swelling for action; not a sinew but is

strung stiff as the gut that holds his bow in form. Each warrior has had his place assigned. A hundred climb to the summit of the hill. Seventy fall in behind that line of boulders which stretches down the southern skirt, and seventy warriors, half with muskets, are lodged in that dry ravine (that was) upon the north.

These places had been kept for ages as posts of defense, and in front of them, along the shore, the timber had been kept down for a bow shot's length. The moon was now well up, and, except in the forest, a man might be seen for many yards away. Upon the summit of the hill, where but little could grow beside stunted brushwood, and where nothing was, except here and there a clump of scrub oak or sumach, and that rocking boulder, it would seem impossible for an Indian to creep unobserved until within cast of a tomahawk. But there they were, and even the watch had not seen or heard them until the second before he gave the signal that so roused the warriors, and in answer to which came a whoop so hideous, so frightful. It was like the voice of a locomotive whistle before science reduced that phonic horror to obedience. It came from the besieging party and was the signal for a general onslaught, and at the summit a hand to hand encounter commenced and was waged with varying success, for although the assailants here outnumbered the Hill Indians as two to one, even after those assigned that post had reached the summit, the Hill men had the advantage of familiar ground and were aided by the darkness which the moonlight only partially dispelled.

The assault was made simultaneously upon the summit and the wings.

The old clearing in front of both boulder barricade and ravine, made it impossible for an enemy to approach without exposing himself to musket shot; and as the first rush was made toward these protected positions a murderous volley met the too eager Northmen, and in a moment threw them into the utmost confusion and consternation, for it had not occurred to them that the near neighbors of the white men were likely to be provided with this more effective weapon, and they had rushed pell-mell into the jaws of death.

That the Quinsigamonds had from time to time become possessed of firearms through their friendly neighbors,—sometimes for service rendered, sometimes merely for good will (for a defaced and discarded firearm was a cheap token on one hand, and an inestimable prize upon the other), had become but little known to other than the nearest at hand tribes, who were more wary of attack, and quite ready to place the strangers in the van, and relinquish to them the honor. The ignorance of the facts on the part of the Northmen had cost them a score of lives at the first onset.

It would be almost unheard of for a body of Indians knowingly to cross open grounds in the face of levelled musketry. They readily enter into hand-to-hand contests, but take few chances at musket range, opposed to men so armed, and it was this aversion to being picked off like so much defenceless game, that deterred the

enemy from again seriously assuming the offensive at these positions.

While the battle was being fiercely waged upon the top of the hill, the shore of the lake resounded with the acoustic horrors of a pandemonium, for, like all savage races, they relied upon the terrifying effects of hideous vocalism to inspire courage upon one hand, and excite fear upon the other.

Up to this time but little effective work had been done beyond the slaughter that attended the volley of musketry, and now, so clearly shone the moonlight across the opening, and in among the tree trunks, where no underbrush obscured the vision, that an Indian could not show an arm, a leg, a shoulder, but it drew fire from behind the boulders, or the protecting earth walls of the ravine, and billeted its owner to the happy hunting grounds.

Every now and then some rash young warrior, thinking to make fame by an exploit, hazarded a forlorn hope, and was gathered to his fathers.

Things remained practically the same at the wings, and might have done so until morning, had not the Washakims, who were engaged in the attack upon the hill top learned by runners of the useless occupation of the Northmen at the wings and ordered them to the summit, in hope to push the Quinsigamonds over the precipice by sheer weight of numbers, as a last resort, where too close fighting, and the consequent confusion

and abandonment of method, had so far rendered this struggle abortive.

Three hundred Indians now clambered up the northern and southern slopes, followed by sharpshooters who recognized in the movement a general retreat, and even after the summit was reached by the pursued, the well armed Quinsigamonds, keeping at a safe distance from the occasional showers of arrows, continued to pour their murderous fire of shot into the black, surging, undefinable mass, which, in its wild confusion and deafening clamor seemed in no way cognizant of the cause of the shrieks and gasps of such as were stung by the whistling, leaden missiles.

The weight of increased numbers began now to tell severely upon the already nearly spent Hill Indians, and as they gave way foot by foot, inch by inch, the eager Washakims, with Tehuanto at their head, began to exult in their almost realized revenge.

Back went the Quinsigamonds, slowly but surely; swinging their sharp stone hatchets in the frenzy of a despair that gloats on dealing out that death it looks for, and even at the point of dissolution exults in compassing an enemy's demise.

They have passed the upper ledge where it crops out at the summit, and have passed that hundred ton boulder that stood beside it. The glare of the great fire below glows upon the painted faces of the Washakims who confront them.

The old squaw, wild with excitement, has heaped the

bed of coals with masses of dry brushwood, until the flames stream upward and shed a ruddy light upon the scene.

Down go the Quinsigamonds, rank by rank, fairly crowded over the rocks, over the precipice, until hardly a score of them are left to dispute the victors' passage and to bar him from his prize, when the sorceress, the Witch of Wigwam, seizes a blazing brand and scales the hillside, halts for a moment at the first rock foothold to catch breath, then darts up the narrow ledge with the agility of a young warrior, as if the frightful clamor had renewed her prime, had imparted new strength to her withered muscles, and suppleness to joints that for many years had creaked with dryness.

Crossing zig-zag up the ledges that long decades back her childish feet had climbed in play, the torch blazing as she went, flying like a woods cat up and over the rocks, eager to cast herself, all that was left of her, upon the altar of her home, she hurries to her death.

The Washakims, awe struck by the apparition, by the presence of her whose necromancy, or whose preternatural insight, foresight, and strange powers had so often beguiled, bewildered, startled and subdued them, opened to the right and left for the maniac, and for the moment ceased to murder, ceased while the crazy red hag passed; passed, save her flaming torch light, out of sight, into the midst of the now waiting, suspensive crowd of Northmen behind them. Some demon's work is on her hands. The powers of darkness have electri-

fied her entire being. Some mad achievement has forecast its wild picture upon her sickly brain. But she, the witch, they dare not check her. They, who feared not death,—feared nothing earthly,—feared that old woman.

She has passed out of the crowd, and out of sight. Only the lurid light of the torch is visible, up over the great boulder, and at either side.

While she was still in view, when she first set foot upon the soil above the scarp, might have been seen by the light of the faggot fire below, five strange, new figures. Figures that showed none of the grime and tear of battle. Figures that leap from rock to rock, agile as deer, and sure footed as foxes, and behind them, but separated by only half a bow shot length, still other two, strange,—for things familiar, but out of expectation, are a strangeness.

One of the two passed up by the zig-zag ledges, coming from the north. One came bounding over the rocks from the south, passed along the narrow ledge to where it parts and runs two ways upward toward the summit. None of the seven had reached the top. The Washakims above had not seen them. Their eyes were fixed upon the light where that she demon had passed from view, while the Northmen, amazed at the antics of what seemed to them some flitting sprite, stood agape. The one was startled, subdued; the other surprised, confounded.

But now the great hill seemed to move upon its base beneath them. To rock and reel like a forest tree shivered by lightning, and the splintered debris, limbs of trees,

rock, earth, arms, legs, whole bodies of men cast by scores into the air and hurled in thick confusion over the precipice, are followed by rushing sound so deep and heavy it would seem as if the granite hill itself had parted and was toppling over. Earth, rocks, and mutilated men follow in the wake of a huge flying mass. Uprooted hemlocks snap in splinters like dry weeds, and follow toward the lake.

A moment's lull has come; and in that moment the seven warriors, who had stopped until the uproar passed, shielded by the overhanging cliffs that two centuries' frosts have crumbled, now sprang toward the top, and as they leave the ledges and half turn towards the light below, we see the face of the white captain, and the low, dark brow of Wandee.

It is their hour of revenge.

Five picked warriors, fresh as if but an hour from their blankets, and two staunch leaders who have wrongs to right.

It was a sorry night for the Washakims. Utterly demoralized by the terrible explosion which to them bore no evidence except of earth's convulsions, added to the frantic movements of the witch to whose machinations they could but attribute the outburst of fire from the earth, and the earthquake that followed; they were in neither mood nor condition to defend themselves from the new foes by whom they were beset; for to them, these two were the ghosts of their most dreaded enemies whom they believed dead, and with them were other spirits,

scarcely less formidable, conjured up to hunt them to despair.

The scene that followed was what might be expected, where angry barbarians are privileged to glut revenge.

When the Hill men met no resistance from the bewildered allies, the captain vainly strove to stay the bloody hands of his ferocious comrades.

But their work was brief. A panic ensued, and the herd of tribesmen scattered like a bevy of frightened quails.

The old squaw went up in the flying ruin she had wrought with the powder stolen at Washakim, and by her dead body, at the foot of the little mountain, was found the mangled remains of Eugene Archer. Ever intent on the evil he had brooded over, he had followed the twice lost girl of Sagatabscot, reckless of danger, heedless of torture from his splintered wrist, into the tents of his dreaded foes.

That great boulder that was toppled from its airy perch upon the crown of Wigwam Hill, at the beck of the Witch of Wigwam now lies on the little flat below, half buried in the sand, and to this day the deep scar is visible where it tore its way down by the southern edge of the rock escarpment of the hill two hundred years ago.

The fight was over; the turmoil was at an end; and the captain and Wandee, each unconscious of the other's present existence until they stood side by side at the explosion, now found time for greeting.

Wandee stood motionless, passionless. The same stern

stoic of the woods as when, without a pang, he shouldered his game and left Shonto to gasp his life away in blood.

He had owed the white man a debt, and had cancelled his obligation. Was it for love? Who ever heard that an Indian could harbor the sentiment? He had fulfilled his savage conception of a duty.

But the captain was cast in a far different mould. He stepped forward with wide open arms, and embracing the still undemonstrative red statue, wept like a child.

“Bull moose got cap’n ’g’in. Wandee help cap’n.”

“Oh, Wandee, you did, and you tried so hard to save my poor, dear, lost Susan.”

“Cap’n stop! Stop cry! Squaw all right. Squaw down wigwam. See? Down fire. Squaw look up—see? Scalp all good—see?”

We leave the captain and the little woman of Sagatabscot Hill to their tender meeting.

The disgraced, defeated, and more than decimated Northmen, soon as their chief could rally the scattering bands that had stampeded like startled crows at the great hill-shake, started on their long journey to Ontario woods, never again to respond to the summons of the valorous king of the Wampanoags. The ills that attended their first adventure were too disastrous, and not until that generation had passed away, not until the French priests of the Church Immaculate had inspired them with hatred for the Saxon heretic, did they venture again to put distance between themselves and the borders of Canadian forests.

The Washakims were crushed in the hour of victory and exultation, crushed and ground to powder like magic, in the stone mortar, under a squaw cook's pestle.

The weird contrivings of the old red witch, who loved nobody, loved nothing but the memories of a savage home and a wild ancestry, had terrified a continent of men, and it only remained for the powers at Boston to dole out the thirty pieces of silver,¹ and the Judas of Narragansett would betray his master,—the great, grand chief of the Wampanoags—King Philip of Mount Hope.

The chief, Tehuanto, lay bruised, almost beyond recognition, and dead, half buried beneath the big boulder on the little flat; and from a fierce, warlike tribe, the Washakims bent to their fate, a scattered, thriftless, alms-taking race of vagabonds.

Wandee lived some years with his little tribe at Wigwam Hill, but their number diminished rapidly, as many of them sickened of contact with civilization and found more congenial haunts among the Penobscots. More of them succumbed to the paralyzing influence of a drink that was ever their master, while those who remained,—after suffering indignity and robbery under the letter of drunkenly executed bargains, losing the fee in their ancient heritage on the lake border; losing their corn lands; and all at the hands of those they had, according to their ability, many times befriended, after a while

¹History tells us how the white man's silver bribed the great chief's tribesman to slay him at musket range from an ambush at Mount Hope.

left their old home by the beautiful water—the Lake of Quinsigamond, a miserable remnant of discouraged, broken-hearted mendicants, rigged like buffoons in a lousy array of cast-off English toggerly—to find precarious living among the squaw men of Hassinomissitt, who thought it no disgrace for a warrior to chop or to hoe, and where a baker's dozen remain to this day in worthless indigence.¹

The wild spirit and proud bearing of Wandee manifested itself in some scions of every generation, and finally culminated in the person of the half wild, fierce, erratic Sal Boston, so well known in this region as an aboriginal terror shrouded in legal immunity, as late as eighteen hundred and fifty. Her tall, lank figure, elastic step, bold and semi-barbarous manners were familiar sights to the boys of Worcester now turned of sixty.

The widow of Sergent, and her little daughter Netty, died in captivity among the Indians of Canada.

Martha was redeemed after seven years dwelling among them, and returning to the plantation and marrying, took possession of the Sergent homestead.

The morning after the discomfited allies abandoned the siege and scattered, each remnant of a tribe for its home, some swift feet were flying over the hill toward Marlborough, and at midday of the next, twelve saddled horses, only eight of them mounted (for Wandee and

¹Within two years of the end of the present century the Hassinomissitts have sold to the whites the remnant of land owned and occupied by them for many hundred years.

the chief scout must be Marlborough's lions for a day), filed in among the old chestnut trees at Wigwam Hill.

Among the riderless horses we see that superb, black stallion, Pompey, led by his old groom, Black Jake, and among the riders we recognize the Deacon and Parson Meekman, Curtis, Hart, Gershom Rice and Jim Pyke, with some of their wives, who purposed to act as especial escort to the little yellow-haired, blue-eyed girl whom we have learned—through sympathy, if nothing else—to love.

I dislike, of all things, to hang my harp on the horn of a precedent. The young lady deserved to become the central figure in a wedding party, but she, with Captain John Wing and their friends, went to Marlborough that day,—and Marlborough was then a long way off.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

MANY people will cavil at the spelling of some of the Indian names, thinking they know it all. But how many will agree in the spelling of names known only as uttered in a stomach-spoken dialect, a hasty, careless, half developed enunciation? My spelling is in accordance with my interpretation of sound as taken from lips but one remove from familiar acquaintance with the local aboriginal type of utterance.

Among such names as have been garbled to suit the fancy of alien authors, I will mention Wapiti, a name for the elk, properly accented upon the first syllable, but improperly perverted by accentuation of the second. Tetassit instead of Tehassit was never heard of until after the expiration of the first quarter of the present century. Hassinomisco, a recent arbitrary substitute for Hassinomissit. Waushacum, a veritable orthographical abortion, an inexcusable distortion of the word Washakim.

Quinsicamong was the original of Quinsigamond, but as the last is in universal acceptance, and possibly more euphonious, and as it is perhaps the part of wisdom to hand down to futurity unquestioned a local appellation of growing importance, I give it as at present spoken.

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